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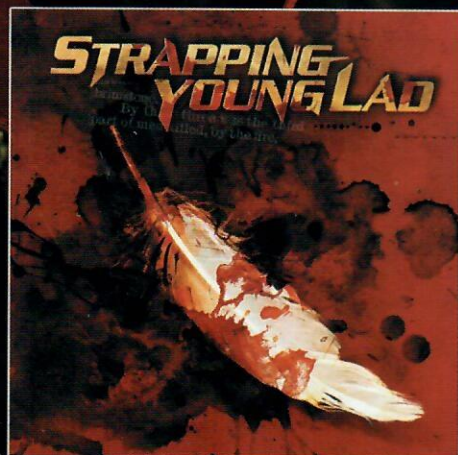
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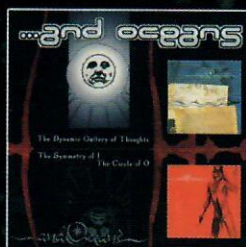
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New York metalcore veterans make their long awaited return with *Bluetality* featuring the original line-up with Dave Chavarri (Ill Nino) on drums and produced by Billy Milano.



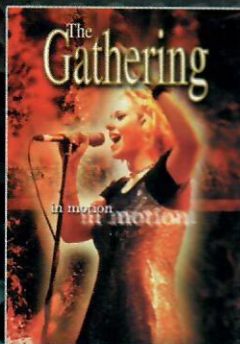
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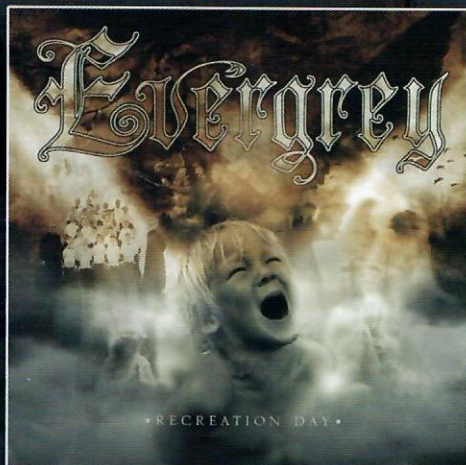
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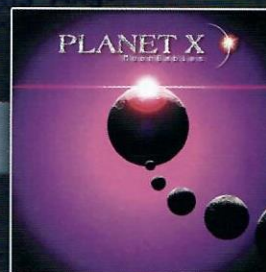
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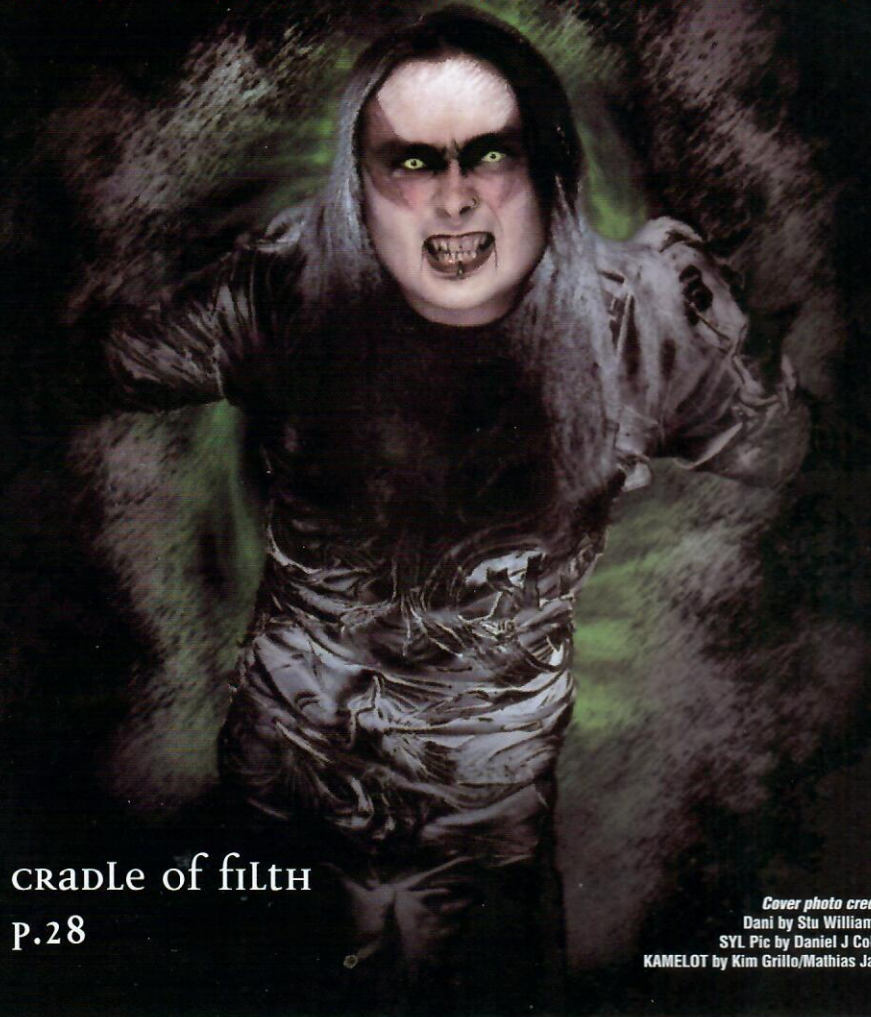


PLANET X
"Moon Babies"



THRESHOLD
"Critical Mass"

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Editor in Chief

Tim Henderson (metaltim@bravewords.com)

Senior Editor

Martin Popoff (martin@inforamp.net)

Senior Writers

Carl Begai (Germany - carlbegaibwbk@yahoo.ca)

Mark Gromen (U.S.A. - MGromen@aol.com)

Aaron Small (Canada - asmall@arvotek.net)

Chris Bruni (Canada - cbruni@istar.ca)

Mitch Lafon (Canada - angeloface@aol.com)

Staff Writers

David Perri (hume2112@total.net)

Allan Grusie (agrusie@rogers.com)

Jasun Mark (jasun1@sympatico.ca)

Greg Pratt (demento@islandnet.com)

Alex S. Johnson (TROLLEYDOGS@aol.com)

Design & Visual Mayhem

Hugues Laflamme (pilgrim@bravewords.com)

Angie Aue (angie@bravewords.com)

Web Masters

Hugues Laflamme (pilgrim@bravewords.com)

Blaise Laflamme (blaise@laflamme.org)

Accounts Manager / Finance Officer

Jackie Short (jack@bravewords.com / jacx666@istar.ca)

Administration

Scott Cairns (scott@bravewords.com)

KnuckleTracks CD mastered by Jasun Mark

BW&BK On-line Contributors:

Canada: Mike Drew (aormike@yahoo.co.uk),
Mitch Joel (mitch@airborne-e.com)

U.S.: Tim Wadzinski (tsw512@yahoo.com)

James Bickers (james@seaoftanquility.org)

Chris Smith (kingrock@ev1.net)

Kurt Torster (courtesy of SFK - ktorster@yahoo.com)

Clay Marshall (ClayMarshall@aol.com)

Australia: John Dokken (northwest@ozramp.net.au)

Japan: Hiroyuki Kodaira

Brazil: Gustavo Monsanto and Eduardo de Souza Bonadia
(strikemag@ig.com.br), Vitor Bonesso (Backstage Radio Show
- backstage@regra.net), Fernando Souza Filho (Rock Brigade -
rockbrigade@sti.com.br)

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NORTH AMERICA

BW&BK Canada

368 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5B 1S5
Phone 416.229.2966
Fax 416.586.0819

BW&BK U.S.

PO Box 5015
Massena, NY
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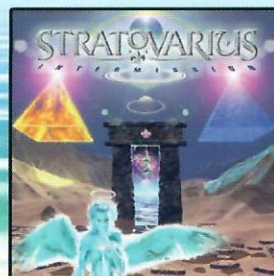
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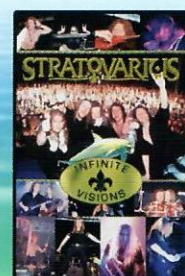
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By Clay Marshall

"We Hope Rob Rejoins The Band!"

After years of rumors, innuendoes and denials, it finally appears official: **JUDAS PRIEST** has publicly admitted that the Ripper Owens era is, for all intents and purposes, over. "We hope Rob rejoins the band so we can go out this summer, but part of the ball's in his court, so he's going to have to make a decision," drummer **Scott Travis** exclusively told **BW&BK** at **NAMM** recently. It remains unclear if a reunited **Priest** would go it alone, tour with **TWISTED SISTER** as has been reported elsewhere, or team up with **IRON MAIDEN**. Whatever happens, though, a resurrection is near.

In regards to this posting, Jayne Andrews, Management Coordinator for Judas Priest, commented: "I really do not know where this came from but there is no truth in this comment about Judas Priest having a reunion with Rob Halford and doing some dates in the Summer. Ripper Owens is Judas Priest's vocalist and we have no plans to go out with Rob in the Summer!!"

After **BW&BK** released an audio file of the interview, Andrews again felt compelled to comment: "There are yet again stories circulating regarding a 'quote' that was made - to put the record straight - this is totally incorrect - Ripper Owens is **JUDAS PRIEST**'s vocalist and we are not planning any Summer shows with Rob Halford - in other words nothing has changed!!! As I have said a million times unless you hear it from us as an **OFFICIAL** announcement **DON'T BELIEVE IT!!!!**"

She issued another statement soon thereafter: "I have spoken to Scott and it turns out he was at the **NAMM** show and a guy started talking to him asking him some questions - he asked if Rob was rejoining and then he asked about **RACER X** and then more about **PRIEST** - Scott says he first of all did not know the guy had a tape recorder and secondly was only saying something that he would have liked to happen at some stage. This is not any-

thing official - if we have anything to say it will come via me! There is no truth in this."

In related news, Owens appeared on **WNEW-FM**'s "Eddie Trunk Rocks" to dispute Travis' comments, saying that the group was temporarily unable to locate the drummer to find out exactly what he said or what he meant by his statement. Owens then said that he plans to become more involved in the band's songwriting process, having written lyrics for three songs slated for Priest's next studio album due out in 2004. Ripper's sole songwriting contribution to Priest so far has been the track "What's My Name?", which appeared as a bonus cut on the Japanese version of **Demolition**.

At this point it's unclear whether Priest's next studio album will surface on Atlantic or Steamhammer/SPV, the label which just released the band's **Live In London** CD and DVD. It appears Atlantic did not renew the option for a second release most likely due to dismal sales of **Demolition**. To add more fuel to reunion rumours, in September, 2004 the band celebrates their 30th Anniversary as a recording unit (their debut, **Rocka Rolla** release date was September 1974) and fans/promoters around the world have their fingers crossed for an original reunion tour. Time will tell as the pieces fall in place!

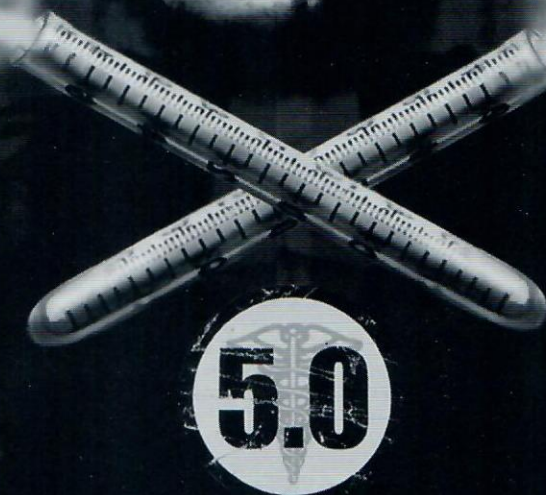
ROB HALFORD INS APPROVED!

ROB HALFORD's manager John Baxter announced recently that the **INS** (Immigration and Naturalization Service) in the US has approved the Metal God's O-1 Visa (U.S. Outstanding Performers Class Visa). He'll be back in the country soon. Halford rescheduled the following dates that were canceled recently. They were set as follows: February 1st in Las Vegas, NV at House Of Blues, 2nd in West Hollywood, CA at House Of Blues and the 7th in Anaheim, CA at House Of Blues. **TESTAMENT**, **VIO-LENCE**, and **EXHUMED** are support on the dates. **DEATH ANGEL** was to be added to the February 2nd show. The band departed for Japan on February 8 and their first performance was set for Tokyo on February 11th. Plans were to film the two Tokyo shows (potentially Osaka as well) for a Halford DVD release. Halford have also confirmed a gig at L'Amour in Brooklyn, NY on February 28th. They share the bill with **SYMPHONY X**. Halford are currently planning a North American tour, tentatively set to begin in late March.

In other news, the guitar spot left vacant by the departed Patrick Lachman (left in order to concentrate on his band **DIESEL MACHINE**) will be filled by band producer/co-writer Roy Z (**TRIBE OF GYPSIES**, **BRUCE DICKINSON**, **ROB ROCK**). A posting at the **HALFORD** website, www.robhalford.com, reads: "The Metal God and Fans are looking for a bad ass, six string mutha. Send a sample of your work on CD; along with a VHS of a live performance and your contact info to: EMAS, Inc., P.O. Box 93430, Phoenix, Arizona 85070 USA."

Finally, to coincide with their forthcoming Japanese tour with **CHILDREN OF BODOM**, JVC Japan is releasing a new **HALFORD** EP called **Forging The Furnace**. Due out on January 22nd, tracks include: "Wrath Of God", "Handing Out Bullets", "Fugitive", "She", "Betrayal (video)", "In The Morning (video)".

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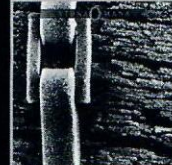
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IRON MAIDEN

2003 Plans Solidifying!

IRON MAIDEN are preparing for a 2003 assault on the world by announcing a few advance dates in what will be a spectacular tour next year. The dates include: June 6th - 8th at the Rock Am Ring/Rock Im Park festivals in Nurburgring and Nurnberg, Germany; June 25th at the Palais Omnisport in Paris, France; June 27th at the Roskilde Festival in Denmark; June 28th at Stockholm Stadium in Sweden (31,000+ capacity!); June 30th at Hartwall Arena in Helsinki, Finland; July 2nd Spektrum in Oslo, Norway.

Having taken some well-deserved time off the road, the band have returned from their sabbatical and are in London recording their next album due out in late 2003. This will be the band's 13th studio album and once again they will be enlisting the production talents of Kevin Shirley who also produced their *Brave New World* album and more recently the live *Rock In Rio* album. Shirley is providing fans with up-to-the minute updates at his website, www.cavemanproductions.com.

In other news, www.ironmaiden.com, reports that the Clive Burr MS Trust has collected a total of 235,000 British pounds after costs. The Trust is making regular payments to help with Clive's living expenses, and will prioritize the need to help with the cost of medical treatment in the future.

SOILWORK

Six Songs In The Can!

SOILWORK have already finished writing six songs for their forthcoming album. The group began recording the material themselves on December 16th, with hopes of releasing the new album in April, 2003, through Nuclear Blast. Recording of guitars and keyboards will take place at Queenstreet Recording in Helsingborg with producer Fredrik Nordstrom. Drums will be recorded at Dug-Out Recording in Uppsala with Daniel Bergstrand (MESHUGGAH, STUCK MOJO). Says the band, "We want to have a more 'alive' and acoustic sound to the drums this time. We are also big fans of Daniel's previous work regarding drums on other albums." Vocals and bass will be recorded at Studio Fredman, where the mixing will also be done.

"The songs will probably sound a lot like Natural Born Chaos, but we are focusing on making even better choruses." A tour in support of the release with CHILDREN OF BODOM is in the works. In other news, Soilwork are confirmed to perform at the Blind Guardian Open Air Festival, scheduled to take place June 13-14, 2003 at BGS Open Air Arena in Coburg/Bamberg, Germany. They will play on Saturday the 14th in between PRIMAL FEAR and NAPALM DEATH.

DEATH ANGEL

To Record New Record!

DEATH ANGEL have officially reunited and plan to release a new album in late 2003 or early 2004. In a recent interview with *Grinder*, bassist Dennis Pepa commented: "We had a meeting and we really dug deep to see what we all thought of Death Angel and where we wanted to take it. In the end we decided that we're officially back as a full-on band. We begin writing for the new album in January 2003. I can't fucking wait! It's gonna be heavy as fuck! We're gonna focus on where we originated from and write a heavy batch of jams. At this point we don't have a record label but we're pretty sure it won't be too hard to get signed (fingers crossed)." "Do I hear any takers?" Hahahahaha! I hate the fucking record industry. They're all assholes, just like managers and lawyers - they should all die. Seriously."

"For years after we broke up people would ask us to get back together. We even had offers to go on tour and record even while we were broken up. We said 'No' to every single offer or thought to put the band back together. Not until we heard about Chuck and the benefit that was for him. We were invited to play the Thrash Of The Titans. We thought that we needed to play this show not for us but for Chuck Billy and his cause. So we pushed our bullshit aside and finally came to an agreement that we would do this show. So, we actually have Chuck to thank. He was the first reason we got back together in the first place. That show made us realize that we were meant to be Death Angel."

ANNIHILATOR have inked a three album deal with AFM Records. Says leader Jeff Waters: "Here we go guys and gals! Finally a North American release on the way for Waking The Fury, Double Live Annihilation AND the next Annihilator studio CD in 2003! AFM will be releasing Double Live Annihilation in Europe in early 2003 as well as the next three studio CDs worldwide!"... **MARTY FRIEDMAN**'s live band that he'll tour with in support of the new Music For Speeding album will include bassist David Ellefson (ex-MEGADETH) and drummer Jimmy DeGrasso (ex-Megadeth). A yet-to-be-announced second guitarist will soon be announced. The tour is set to begin sometime in March. More details will be announced as they become available. Meanwhile, Friedman performed **JASON BECKER**'s End Of The Beginning concerto with the San Francisco Community Center Orchestra And Chorus on December 31st and January 1st... Former **ANTHRAX** vocalist **JOEY BELLADONNA** (www.joeybelladonna.com) recently began work on a new, as-yet untitled album with his new self-titled band. The album will be available through the band's new website, www.joeybelladonna.com, which will soon be updated with some new music clips... **ELEGY** vocalist and **CONSORTIUM** mastermind, Ian Parry informs BW&BK that all the keyboard and piano parts, for the next installment of the Consortium Project, have been completed by Joshua Dutrieux (Elegy). Bass tracks were once again handled by his former partner in **VENGEANCE**, Jan Bijlsma, as well as Marcel Van Der Zwam, who played on Parry's solo efforts. Ian is putting his touch to the backing vocals of Dutch television actress Ingeborg Wieten, who also appears as part of a duet, on the album's ballad, Kamelot guitarist/founder; Thom Youngblood is scheduled to record some guitar tracks, joining a guest stint by Halford string-bender Mike Chlasciak, recorded earlier. Parry is scheduled to return to Europe soon to continue recording guitars with Stephan Lill (**VANDEN PLAS**), at Basement Studios, where the album will be mixed... **SOILENT GREEN** and **EYEHATEGOD**'s split 7" single is now available through Incision Records. Meanwhile, Soilent Green are currently working on new material for their next release. They are expected to hit the studio in Spring 2003 and then tour in support of the release. In related news, Ben Falgout is undergoing therapy for walking and is completely out of the wheelchair. One additional surgery was set for mid-last month for his left heel...

SARCOFAGO's Wagner Antichrist have a new album called *Alcoholic Death Noise* which was produced by Sarcofago's Geraldo Minelli... **SCAR CULTURE** have split with vocalist, Pherox Karai, and touring drummer, Alpheus Underhill. Remaining members John Conley (guitar, head songwriter) and Frank Cannino (bass) will immediately begin the writing process for the band's sophomore disc, due out late this year. Original drummer, Duke Borisov, will return to the fold for the writing process, as well as recording. Scar Culture are currently searching for a new vocalist and drummer (mainly for touring purposes). All interested parties should contact scrape718@aol.com and must be in the NYC area or be willing to relocate... The Australian edition of **STRAPPING YOUNG LAD**'s forthcoming self-titled album, will include the bonus track 'Detox' (live)... Sean Malone's **GORDIAN KNOT** will release their second album, *Emergent*, early this year through the Sensory label. Malone is joined by onetime **CYNIC** bandmate Jason Gobel on guitar and **YES/KING CRIMSON** drummer Bill Bruford. This is the trio Sean describes as the "core group." Guests on the release will include Steve Hackett (guitar; **GENESIS**), Jim Matheos (guitar; **FATES WARNING**), Paul Masvidal (guitar; **Cynic**) and Sean Reinert (drums, **Cynic**). Malone describes the new album as, "instrumental music written from a vocal perspective. There is structure similar to vocal music where you expect verses and choruses, though the verses are through composed solo sections, and choruses retain an integrated melodic framework. In other words, it's not just jamming"... **WINTERS BANE** have announced that Alexander Koch (**POWERGOD**, **SPIRAL TOWER**) is their new vocalist. The band's founder/guitarist Lou St. Paul states: "I haven't been this excited about a vocalist since Tim Owens joined in 1991." The band are currently writing the follow-up to their *Heart Of A Killer* album, which featured Tim "Ripper" Owens (**JUDAS PRIEST**) on vocals. The new album will be released sometime in 2003... **VADER** will release a mini album next fall, while their next full-length is not due until 2004. The mini will feature bonus tracks recorded at the sessions for their *Revelations* album, and a few new tracks. Also coming in 2003 from Vader is a new DVD via Metal Mind Productions. Available only in Poland, the release will include the group's recent appearance on TV Krakow. On April 22nd, 2003 Vader will embark on a 25 date European tour. A Polish tour will happen in September; to be followed by another round of European dates with **HYPOCRISY**. Details are still being

worked out for shows in Eastern Europe, the US and Japan... The End Records is releasing **STAR OF ASH** the solo project of Heidi S. Tveitan aka Ithriel of the acclaimed experimental act **PECCATUM**. The project also presents members of **EMPEROR** and **Trickster G.** (from **ULVER**) on vocals. The debut album, *Iter Viator*, has been proclaimed as a poetic and graceful drama with melancholic arrangements of strings, keyboards and voices... Female keyboard player Cecilie "Zilla" Eidskrem has become a permanent member of Norwegian band **ASHES TO ASHES**... **THE GATHERING**'s new album, *Souvenirs*, will be released through Psychonaut Records on February 24th in Benelux, France, Spain, Portugal, GAS, Greece, UK and Italy. On March 12th the album will be released in the US, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. In other news, The Gathering will begin a European tour on March 18th that will see the band play in France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Italy, Czech Republic and Switzerland. In May the band will tour The Netherlands and Belgium. The band is also confirmed for the 12th Wave Gotik Treffen 2003 in Leipzig, Germany... The Billboard Boxscore, a measure of how much money bands earned on the road in 2002, reports that **OSZY OSBOURNE**'s *Ozzfest* tour was the lone festival tour among the top 25, grossing \$24.5 million. Other tours in the Top 25 earnings include **PAUL MCCARTNEY** (\$126.1 million), **AEROSMITH** (\$36.3 million), **THE WHO** (\$28.6 million) and **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN** (\$22.2 million)... **CANDLEMASS**' *Doomed For Live: Reunion 2002* album should be out as you read this. The tracklisting: CD1: 'Mirror Mirror', 'Bewitched', 'Dark Are The Veils Of Death', 'Demons Gate', 'Under The Oak', 'At The Gallows End', 'Samaritan', 'Dark Reflections', 'Mourners Lament' and 'Black Stone Wielder'. CD2: 'Well Of Souls', 'A Sorcerer's Pledge', 'Bearer Of Pain', 'Ancient Dreams', 'Somewhere In Nowhere', 'Solitude' and 'Crystal Ball'... **MANOWAR** have issued their 2DVD set, *Fire And Blood via Steamhammer*. DVD1: *Blood In Brazil* features Phillips Monsters Of Rock documentary (1998, Sao Paulo). DVD2: *Hell On Earth Part 2* features *The Tour Stages* (the best of all concerts), live tracks, background info, specials and interviews from concerts around Europe... Guitarist **TRACY G**'s new double CD set, *Deviating From The Set List*, is now available and features 24 different cover songs... Dave 'Scarface' Castillo has joined **DECEASED** full-time as the new drummer. King Fowley has survived a life-threatening blood clot in his lung this past year and he's been left with permanent damage to both airways, basically ending his duties behind the kit... Aftermath Music will release **RUNEMAGICK**'s *Darkness Death Doom* album on March 16th, 2003. The album will be available in three formats: a 2CD strictly limited edition set including *The Pentagram* CD, a limited edition digipak CD and a standard CD. The band's album *The Pentagram* will be available on limited edition CD from May 19th, 2003. All CDs will feature a multimedia section... Singer Rick Mythiasin (**TARAXACUM**/ex-**STEEL PROPHET**) recently commented about his departure from S.P.: "I quit Steel Prophet 'cause I wanted to be myself, and have more creative input," he stated simply. "I was restricted, didn't like being held back. To me, the songwriting was really boring. Steve Kachinsky (founding guitarist) didn't let the other musicians in the band have a crack at writing. The creative spark died the minute he started telling me how to sing. Let's set the story straight. He is running around telling everyone how I was fired from Steel Prophet. The fact is I quit. Now I can focus all my energy on Taraxacum. It's cool working with German musicians. At the moment we are working on eight songs." Taraxacum's line-up also includes bassist Tobias Exxel (**EDGUY**), drummer Franky Wolf and keyboardist Ferdy Doernberg. Their forthcoming album, *Rainmaker*, is due out this Fall via MTM... **VANISHING POINT** are currently in the studio (Palm Studios in Melbourne, Australia) recording record their third album which the band says will be "in the same vein as *Tangled In Dream* (their previous record), but will definitely be a little bit heavier... In a recent Noise Records Q&A session, former **HELLOWEEN** singer Michael Kiske was asked about rejoining his old bandmates. He remarked that his new project, **SUPARED** is "much more interesting for me than any reunion could ever be. I don't think that's going to happen. Things have their time, and it's good to let the past be over. I also never will make a band again with people who aren't my true friends! I am OK with Kai Hansen and Roland Grapow nowadays, but that's it. It does not go together with my idea of fruitful creativity or true music"... **WITHIN TEMPTATION** have inked a deal with GUN Records. The label re-released the band's *Mother Earth* album on January 27th with four bonus tracks and new cover art. The band will support **PARADISE LOST** on their upcoming European tour which runs from February 14th to March 10th... Listenable Records have signed Israel's **NAIL**

Dio

By Martin Popoff

For Your Eyes & Ears Only!

Lots happening in the Dio camp: first off, on Friday, December 13, Ronnie and his band of rogues recorded a show at The Roseland in New York for his upcoming DVD, *Evil Or Divine?: Live In Concert*. And why The Roseland? "We played it before," says Ronnie. "It's a good-sized gig; very conducive to filming. The company we're using is a New York-based company, which makes it a lot easier. Our affiliation with the lighting and sound people is a very strong one in New York as well. So I think, more for the supplies that we need and secondary to the fact that it's a good gig and that New York crowds are great for us. There probably will be a few people who turn up from upstate New York (ed. Ronnie's original homeland). But I don't expect a lot. The consideration is the show this time; there's not a lot of chance for schmoozing to go on because we want to get it right. I think the less outside things we have to be concerned with, the easier it's going to be for everybody, just from a purely mental-clearing state."

And after that, look for a pretty cool box set from Rhino, distinguished from past Dio comps in that it looks at the whole career. Post-Elf anyways. "Yes, there's a boxed set that is being



released in late April, which is, I think, 37 songs, spanning my career from Elf until right now. It's a Rhino product, which is obviously directly involved with Warner Brothers; it's one of their companies. It's done by the same people who did the last one, *The Beast Of Dio*, this of course just being very much more perhaps introspective because it has so many songs from the beginning to the end: Elf, Rainbow, Sabbath and Dio." In terms of rarities, unfortunately, there isn't much, although Ronnie figures some unreleased live tracks should make the cut.

And looking out to the future, Ronnie hints of bombastic, epic work to come. "When we finish this DVD, we'll take some time away from it and we'll need some time away from each other, I'm sure. I'm going to go back home for awhile. By home, I mean New York, to see my folks, just for a week or ten days or so. Then when I get back to L.A., I'm sure I'm going to just be chomping at the bit to do something anyway. So I'll begin writing for the album then, which should be *Magica II* and *III*. So at least there's a plan for that. And Doug Aldrich is just like I am; he can't stand to sit around and do nothing so that will be interesting. But most important is to just take a bit of time away from this and just generally gather our lives around us again. We have another album to do and that's going to be long process and it's going to be a very involved album for me because it's going to be *Magica* again. When that stops, you know

I may have some time this year to do other things, because we plan on only going to South America for a very brief period of time, probably in February, and then only doing festivals this year. I've had enough of touring constantly. I think it's important that we take steps backward and not be quite so available all the time." ☼

RUNNING WILD

by Carl Begai

Smooth Sailing

Running Wild's last studio album, *The Brotherhood*, was a definite departure for the band sound-wise, a move that did not go over well with many a fan. Frontman/founder Rolf Kasperek opted to take his traditionally high speed metal outfit in a more rock-oriented AC/DC-ish direction, but the whole concept of a mid-tempo album came off just plain wrong to the vast majority of Running Wild's cult following. Even so, the band has enough of a history that the tour that followed turned out to be a success, resulting in a live album and DVD called *The Brotherhood Live 2002*. According to Rolf, this is only the tip of the iceberg as he settles in to begin celebrating 20 years of Running Wild in 2003.

"This was the first real opportunity we had to record a live album in about 15 years," says Rolf. "We decided to do it only three weeks before the first show, so there's nothing really special about the set list or anything; it's just the regular set list that we used for the whole tour. The thing is, Running Wild is involved with two record companies, and since they're rivals on the market, they both wanted a piece of the pie, and usually it's quite hard to get them to agree on the same things. This time, however, I had the chance to do this live album for our current

record label (BMG), and I'm involved in a project about the history of Running Wild which will come out through our old record company (Sanctuary/Noise) next year. So, amazingly, everyone is satisfied (laughs)."

The upcoming retrospective will be done in the spirit of Accept's recent DVD+ package, *Metal Blast From The Past*. In other words, much more than a simple Best Of compilation.

"There will be some great stuff on it," Rolf promises. "There are some unreleased tracks from 1983 and 1987 and we re-recorded some old songs and re-mixed others. There's some old video footage that I recorded during all the different album productions, and there's lots of live concert footage as well. So, one of the CDs will be in the DVD+ format. The plan is to have it out next summer."

With regards to the new live album, it features Rolf backed up by what is essentially a brand new band. One has to wonder if he was at all worried about Running Wild being represented properly as a band with a 20 year history, given the new players.

"It could have gone that way and been terrible," Rolf concedes, "but even during the first rehearsal I knew that things would work. It sounded like we had been playing together for ten years. I wasn't worried because everyone in the band is an experienced musician, so it was very easy for them to fit into what I



needed from them."

As for the tour itself, Rolf admits that it wasn't a success in terms of costs versus profit, but definitely a victory in terms of fan turnout, especially in light of *The Brotherhood*'s questionable direction.

"We lost on the costs, especially because we wanted to give the fans what they expect from Running Wild - the elaborate stage set, the pyrotechnics, everything. It was worth it in the end; you can see that on the DVD. And, it was really interesting to talk to the fans, because some of them were saying 'You can leave all that Judas Priest/AC/DC-type shit out; we want the old pirate songs!' Directly beside them were other fans saying 'Just a second! We're here for everything, including that Priest/AC/DC-type shit!' I loved that. It means we did everything right." ☼

RAUNCHY The Strapping Young Lads...

by David Perri

really know what it means so it's not a problem. But with you guys, the name really doesn't fit the music."

That's the understatement of the year. On its debut album, *Velvet Noise*, Raunchy plays a brand of cyber-futuro industrial-metal that harkens back to mid-era Fear Factory and Strapping Young Lad, bands that are nowhere near the '80s hairband/sleaze imagery that the word 'raunchy' intrinsically implicates. "We've been using the name for several years, and when we first started the band we weren't playing the same music we are now. We thought about changing it, but we couldn't. The name is us and feels comfortable, but if we were starting all over we would probably choose something else."

The importance of musical monikers aside, the story inside the story in Raunchy's case is that the band is now on Nuclear Blast, hitting the big time directly. "We were signed to Mighty Music, a Danish label," explains Tilsted. "We got good reviews - and all of a sudden labels were interested. Nuclear Blast was the biggest, so we signed with them."

There's no denying that Velvet Noise could be the long-

lost Burton C. Bell/Dino Cazares collaboration, or the latest from Mr. Devin Townsend himself. But, despite such hero worship, what Raunchy loses in originality it makes up for in performance and songwriting. And Tilsted doesn't seem concerned that his band's formula is so reliant on the works of others. "I can understand why people say we sound like those two bands and Machine Head. Some people think we're complete rip-offs, but that's when I start to disagree. There are other elements to our music that people don't focus on because they're so intent on hearing the Strapping parts."

On a quirky note, a glance through Velvet Noise's song titles reveals a glaring literary reference: 'This Is Not An Exit', a direct quote from Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*. Tilsted elaborates on the band's reading preference. "Yeah, it is a reference to the book. We thought that sentence fit the lyrics, even though the song isn't about the book. Of course, after we released the album we found out Anthrax had a song called 'This Is Not An Exit'. Honestly, we didn't know that at the time we chose the title! (laughs)." ☼

ANTHRAX Record Delayed AGAIN!

ANTHRAX drummer Charlie Benante updated www.anthrax.com recently with the news that their forthcoming album, *We've Come For You All*, (out in Japan on February 4th and in Europe on February 24th - the first single, the excellent 'My Safe Home' was out on January 27th) has been pushed back to April 15 in North America. "Go ahead and yell... finished? GOOD. It's only been 73 years since Vol. 8; what's another week or two? The record company needed the extra time to put more time into the promotion of the "greatest record ever made." For those who think it is OK to download it I will say this - WHY? What right do you have to take MY Music for free? It wasn't recorded for free. This is a serious issue and I would like to see the record companies get behind it and REALLY do something about it. I really think that this whole stealing music thing is really going to hurt music in the coming years... If a band can't sell any records, that band won't be able to make any records. That goes for every single band/artist, and then what do we have? Please be patient and wait for the "greatest record ever made." Alright maybe it's not the "greatest record ever made" but how can you top Peter Dinklage's first solo album?"

ANTHRAX' upcoming European tour kicks off on March 5th at the Ambassador Theater in Dublin, Ireland. The dates conclude on March 23rd at Rockfabrik in Ludwigsburg, Germany. They've also been confirmed for Pismo Rock a three day festival (March 27th - 29th) at Pino Puente in Granada, Spain. Other acts confirmed to perform at the event include CRADLE OF FILTH, IN EXTREMO, SARATOGA and TRAIL OF TEARS. Anthrax also have Spanish dates booked for March 27th at Barcelona's Razzmatazz II and on March 28th at Madrid's Macumba.

THE HAUNTED The Killing Fields!

THE HAUNTED's forthcoming album, *One Kill Wonder*, will have the following tracklisting: 'Privation Of Faith', 'God Puppet', 'Shadow World', 'Everlasting', 'D.O.A.', 'Demon Eyes', 'Urban Predator', 'Downward Spiral', 'Shithead' (an advance MP3 is posted at www.earache.com), 'Bloodletting' and 'One Kill Wonder'. The album is due out on February 17th through Earache. As well, the band's forthcoming DVD, *Caught On Tape*, will be out in North America on March 11. This DVD, the band's first, contains two complete live shows from the Made Me Do It World Tour including incendiary shows from Tokyo where they performed in front of 2,000 fans, and the more intense setting of the 200 capacity Malmö. Bonus features include a 25 minute documentary of behind the scenes action during the recording session for the new album, *One Kill Wonder*, with exclusive interviews with the band members and producer. Two advance audio tracks from the upcoming album also feature.

Watch for a full feature on The Haunted in BW&BK #68!

IN FLAMES Back-Tracking?!

IN FLAMES, LACUNA COIL, ANTHRAX and SHADOWS FALL are hitting the road in Europe beginning March 5th in Dublin, Ireland at the Ambassador Theater and running through late March. In Flames plan to return to North America for a string of dates to run from March to May. Confirmed festival dates for this summer include: June 14 - Provinssirock - Finland, July 25 - Pitea Dansar och Ler, Pitea - Sweden, August 23 - Summer Breeze - Germany and August 24 - Metal Fest Vienna - Austria.

The band added on their website that they "will pack their bags full of ideas and travel to Denmark where we will start the process of what's to be the next In Flames record. As we did for r2r [Reroute To Remain] we will turn off our phones, put our personal lives on hold and disconnect our entire contact with the outside world so that we can focus 100% on making a great new album. Once again it will be the five of us, our equipment and the cheapest possible beer we can find!

Some of you had some thoughts on what we can change with our music, and that's always appreciated, but as always we will choose no other path than the one chosen by the 5 members of In Flames!

Meanwhile, the band have been nominated for a Grammy in Sweden. They are up against HELLACOPTERS, OPETH, MUSTACH and PATHOS.

WITHIN and have released the band's self-titled debut album. Guests on the album include Mille Petrozza (**KREATOR**), Tomas Lindberg (ex-**AT THE GATES**, **THE CROWN**) and Robert Gonnella (**ASSASSIN**)... **RAPTURE**'s Songs For The Withering is due out now and it is their first release to feature a dual vocal with the addition of vocalist Henry Villberg. The album is already available through Spikefarm records in Europe... **MOURNING BELOVETH** have signed to Aftermath Music in Norway. Their new CD, *The Sullen Sulcus*, should be out as you read this... **DREAM EVIL**'s sophomore effort, *Evilized*, is out now in Europe through Century Media. The album was recorded at Studio Fredman in Sweden. The Japanese version of the CD will contain two bonus tracks. A North American release date has yet to be announced. This month the band join the second leg of the **HAMMERFALL** tour which will lead them to Germany and Scandinavia...

MAZE OF TORMENT have now officially left Necropolis Records due to some problems with the new album *The Unmarked Graves*. Hellspawn Records will release the record. The album contains a cover of the classic **MISFITS** track 'All Hell Breaks Loose' and was recorded at The Abyss Studio with Tommy Tagtgren... **SINERGY**'s Kimberly Goss recently gave a writer the green light for an exclusive autobiography. The biographer will chronicle the life and times of Kimberly, revealing many exclusive stories and facts about her life that she has never even spoken of in any interview. The book will first be published in Finnish, but is currently in negotiations to have a worldwide release in English... **CHILDREN OF BODOM**'s new album, *Hate Crew Deathroll*, has entered Finland's album chart at #1. The album came out in Japan through Universal on February 5th, and will be released in Sweden through Universal's Stockholm Records on March 10th and in Germany through Universal's Motor Music on March 17th. The band's European tour with **SOILWORK** begins on April 18th in Stockholm, SWE at Lilla Arenan and runs until May 19 in Osnabrück, GER at Hyde Park. They are also confirmed to appear at the 17th annual South By Southwest Music Festival (SXSW), set to be held March 12-16 in Austin, Texas... **NIGHTWISH** (along with **BLAZE**) have been confirmed to headline the second day of the Bloodstock 2003 - the two-day U.K. event occurs August 29-30, at the Assembly Rooms in Derby. Meanwhile, Spinefarm Records have decided to move up the release date for the band's forthcoming DVD in Finland to May 26th... In **KATATONIA** studio news, Anders and Fred have just finished up recording a massive dose of guitars. An intense vocal session has now begun as the last stage before mix-down. The drums and bass tracks for the 15 songs have already been recorded. Dan Swano has been tapped to mix the album, due out through Peaceville Records in April... **ANIMAL**, featuring former **W.A.S.P.** guitarists Randy Piper and Chris Holmes, vocalist Rich Lewis, bassist Burn Coldewey and drummer Frank Garisto, have released their new album, *900 LB*. Steam, through Parris Records... Austria's **MASTIC SCUM** will soon release their new album, *Scar*, through Germany's Cudgel Agency. The album features 12 new tracks of what the band refers to as "MELVINS meets NAPALM DEATH."

The band are planning a European tour for March 2003... **TROUBLE** bassist Ron Holzner has left the band for "personal reasons." The remaining members will soon announce a replacement and the band were still set to record their first live album on January 21st at Chicago's House Of Blues. A late 2003 release is expected... Producer Kevin Shirley (**IRON MAIDEN**, **HALFORD**) is in search of a female vocalist for a new project. He's looking for "someone with a voice that matches Tina Turner with James Hetfield!" Interested parties can send off an email to: CaveSearch@aol.com... **MYSTIC**, the new band featuring Frank Gosdzik (ex-**KREATOR**, **SODOM**), have a five track demo CD available at www.mysticband.cjb.net. The site also has a track available for download... **AMORPHIS** have finished recording the instruments for their next release at Helsinki's Finnvox studios. They have tracked 15 songs, ten of which will surface on the new album, due out this spring. Vocals will be tracked at Seawolf studios and will be produced by Hannu Leiden (ex-**HAVANA BLACK**). Meanwhile, Amorphis have lined up the following live dates: November 30 - Skopje Trade Fair - Skopje, MAC, December 13 - Youth Place - St. Petersburg, RUS, 14 - DK - Moscow, RUS and 20 - Pakkokuone - Tampere, FIN... Germany's **DARKSEED** have inked a deal with Massacre Records... **REVENGE OF THE TRIADS** have split up due to problems with their record company, LMC. The band featured Jason Slater (**SNAKE RIVER CONSPIRACY**), Troy Van Leeuwen (**A PERFECT CIRCLE**) and Charlie Clouser (**NINE INCH NAILS**)... **JESUS CHRYSLER**, featured on BW&BK's *Knuckletracks* CD, has released the third CD of the Flame Trilogy, entitled *Burn Out*. It can be purchased individually or as a set at

www.jesuschrysler.net or www.yellowinkrecords.com... **STAR ONE** are planning a DVD release which is said to include raw live video footage from the group's European tour... The Big Metal label have signed Montreal prog metal band **HALF...** **SPIRITUAL BEGGARS** will play the following Japanese dates in April: 17 - Club Quattro - Nagoya, 18 - Shibuya AX - Tokyo, 20 - Big Cat - Osaka and 22 - Club Quattro - Hiroshima... Former **SAVATAGE** frontman Zachary Stevens' new band, **CIRCLE II CIRCLE**, will headline Ybor City, Florida's Twilight club on February 28th. The concert will be recorded for a future DVD release. The band's debut album, *Watching In Silence*, is due out late this month or March through AFM... **TRANSPORT LEAGUE** will enter the Grand Slam studio this month to begin recording new material... **DENATA** will record their new album at studio Hell Smell in Linköping, Sweden. The 13 track release will include a cover of **CELTIC FROST**'s 'Mordid Tales'. A March or April release is expected... The Japanese version of **SINNER**'s *There Will Be Execution* album includes the bonus track 'When Silence Falls'.

The European limited edition version of the album comes with a bonus single featuring 'Wherever I May Roam' (recorded for a Nuclear Blast Metallica tribute album) and two more tracks... **DOUBLE DEALER**/ex-**SABER TIGER** singer Takenori Shimoyama has a new six-piece band called **SIXRIDE**, currently touring around Japan and gearing up to record an album... Former **EOZ/LOUDNESS** singer Masaki Yamada has a new band called **MASAKI PROJECT** and has been featured on a metal tribute CD called *Stand Proud 3*, put out through Avex. The band covers **BOW WOW**'s 'Shot In The Dark', which features guitarist **MARTY FRIEDMAN**, and the **RUSH** classic 'YYZ'. Yamada is also involved in a new project with ex-**EOZ/ANTHEM** drummer Hiro Homma called **SNAKEBITE**... **PASSENGER** is a new project featuring **IN FLAMES** vocalist Anders Friden, ex-**TRANSPORT LEAGUE** drummer Patrik J. Sten, **GARDENIA** guitarist Niclas Engelin (ex-**IN FLAMES**), and **HEADPLATE** bassist Hakan Skoger. The band have completed work on their as-yet-untitled debut album at Gothenburg's Studio Fredman... **FIREBIRD**, featuring ex-**CARCASS**/NAPALM DEATH guitarist Bill Steer, will issue their new album, *Firebird No. 3*, late this month on JVC in Japan. A European deal is near as well. The album already has been mastered, and the artwork is currently the main concern... **AMON AMARTH** European tour dates begin on April 14 in Hamburg... **RAVAGER** are in the studio recording their next album for Osmose... **HOUWITZER** have titled their forthcoming album *Damage Assessment*. The band have a new domain address, www.houwitzer.com... **DIVINE DECAY** are preparing to record the follow-up to their debut, *Songs Of The Damned*. The new ten track album, *Maximize The Misery*, will be produced by Janne Joutsenniemi and mixed by Mikko Karmila (**NIGHTWISH**, **STRATOVARIUS**)... Israel's **LEHAVOTH** have inked a deal with Fadeless Records. The band's debut album, *Hatred Shaped Man*, has already been recorded at Sweden's Soundlab Studios with producer Mieszko Talarczyk (**NASUM**, **GENOCIDE SUPERSTAR**). A February release is scheduled... Maynard James Keenan (**TOOL**, **A PERFECT CIRCLE**) has been in the studio recording vocals for the next APC album. A late summer/early fall release is expected... The organizers of next year's ProgPower Europe 2003 have been receiving a huge number of demos and CDs from bands hoping to be booked for the festival. Artists hoping to secure a spot on the bill can send music with a full bio to: ProgPowerEurope2003-VergeltSa-5991@BAARLO.nl. The Netherlands. All demos will be listened to and feedback will be supplied either way... **KREATOR**'s website, www.kreator-terrorzone.de, reports that the band are currently working on their new live album, *Live Kreation* (Revised Glory). The final mix of the disc will be done with producer Andy Sneap. The release will come with a booklet featuring 36 pages of photos from Kreator's recent tour... **DEEDS** (formerly **DIRTY DEEDS**) have released a new album, *Blown*, through Knight Records. The album was produced by **IRON MAIDEN**'s Steve Harris and is available in the US and Canada through www.knightrecords.com... **HOMO IRATUS** are back with a new EP *Knowledge... Their Enemy*. The set is a prelude to the band's next full-length release and features a new track, 'Protection Through Surveillance', a cover of **SEPULTURA**'s 'Roots Bloody Roots' and videos for the tracks 'Tomahawk Cruise Messiah' and 'Project: New World'. The band are also featured on the *Core Till Death* compilation, available through HeavyCore.org. Other acts on the collection include **MALEVOLENT CREATION**, **PRO-PAIN**, **HATEPLOW** and more... **HALFORD** guitarist Metal Mike Chlasiak has announced the formation of **PAIN MUSEUM**, a new metal band featuring vocalist Tim Clayborne, current Halford drummer Bobby Jarzombek and long time Metal Mike collaborator

Dionysus

Playing God

by Carl Begai



Up until now, Olaf Hayer's claim to fame has been as the singer for Rhapsody guitarist Luca Turilli's solo albums, having appeared on both the *King Of The Nordic Twilight* and, more recently, *Prophet Of The Last Eclipse*. In tandem with the release of the new Turilli opus, Hayer can now be heard as the voice of Swedish bashers Dionysus, a band that has much more in common with traditional power metal than the symphonic acrobatics he has become associated with. Featuring former members of Nation and Sinergy, Dionysus' self-titled debut is not likely to overshadow Hayer's accomplishments with Turilli just yet, but it does indeed get the word out that he is more than just a hired hand looking for a quick buck.

"Dionysus has been around for about three years," says Hayer. "I think it started when Ronny (Millanowicz/drums) quit Sinergy and tried to find people to form a band of his own. When he finally did get a band together, they discovered that things weren't so great without a singer (laughs), so they called me. They had heard me sing on the first Luca Turilli album and asked me to join, so things really came together for me for having done King Of The Nordic Twilight."

Although Hayer was last in line when Dionysus was assembled, he insists that it is a real band and that his responsibilities go beyond just supplying the vocals for the songs, as is the case with Turilli.

"Everyone in this band has the chance to write songs," says Hayer. "There's only one song from me on this album because most of the material was ready when I joined, but that's not a problem for me because we rehearsed the songs together, we changed the arrangements together. It's not like with Luca where everything is ready before I even hear the music. This is only Dionysus' first album, though, so I'll have much more influence on the next one, and we will be a much better songwriting team."

As stated, Dionysus runs in a traditional power metal vein,

comparable to the likes of Helloween and Yngwie Malmsteen in places. There are those, however, that have put Dionysus in a box with Rhapsody and Edguy - two bands that Dionysus resembles the least - without having listened to more than a few bars of music.

"Yeah, that has happened because of my work with Luca and because Tobias Sammet from Edguy helped produce the album," Hayer reveals. "They just see the names and think we sound like those bands, which is totally unfair. I'm actually heavily influenced by old Helloween, and our guitarist is a big Malmsteen fan, which I think you can hear in his playing. We definitely did not re-invent the wheel with the Dionysus album, but we're not a cover band either."

With regards to working with Luca Turilli, Hayer says that he is indeed on call for at least one more album and a tour if things go as planned. Hayer is more than happy to continue working with the Italian maestro, he says, because it is not a master and slave relationship.

"When I work with Luca, the lyrics and the vocal melodies are clear from the beginning because every song is ready when he sends them to me. But, on *Prophet Of The Last Eclipse*, I was totally free to change things if I didn't think something would work with my voice. I would offer suggestions and we would talk about them as equals. I'm really satisfied with the way things work between us, so I'm more than happy to continue singing for him." ☺

VANDEN PLAS

Enter, Stage Right!

by Carl Begai

With the exception of a few dates in France this past November and some scattered gigs across Germany, prog-metal heroes Vanden Plas haven't done any serious touring for their latest album, *Beyond Daylight*, which has been out for the better part of a year. In fact, Vanden Plas turned down an offer to tour for eight weeks with Savatage across Europe in early 2002 and bowed out of supporting the high profile Star One tour through Holland and Germany this past October, two moves that have been considered career suicide by some people, including the band's record label. According to guitarist Stephan Lill, Vanden Plas does perhaps have a few lingering regrets about not going out to support *Beyond Daylight* properly, but prior commitments and signed contracts forced them off the road.

"We're heavily involved with playing in a theater production of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in Kaiserslautern (Germany), and we were booked to play the show at the same time the Savatage tour was offered to us," explains Lill. "We were under contract and we have to earn money, and doing the theater production made the most sense because it pays well and we have a lot of fun doing it. We're responsible for all the musical arrangements, which makes the music heavier and fresher, which is really cool. It would have been nice to do the Savatage tour, but eight weeks away would have been

too long, and we have a reputation to maintain since the contracts with the theater had been signed. At the end, we don't regret any of the decisions we've made."

Theatrical productions, it turns out, will continue to play a big part in Vanden Plas' career from now on. Singer Andy Kuntz is the lead actor in a stage play of *Nostradamus* for which his bandmates are supplying the music, with the production due to start its run in Kaiserslautern early next year. And, the next Vanden Plas album will be a conceptual piece based on the classic tale *The Count Of Monte Cristo*.

"The next album will be done in the style of a theater production," Lill reveals. "There will be ten songs done in typical Vanden Plas style, but there will also be ten songs done in a theatrical style that could be presented on the stage. It sounds crazy, I know, but if there is a band that should be allowed to do something like this, it's us. We've been involved with the theater for ten years now, so we have the experience to pull it off. It's not going to be the next all-star rock opera kind of thing. We want to do this ourselves, and if we need other singers to make it more colorful we won't take them from the metal scene, but from people that we've worked with in the theater."

Thus, we will see a somewhat different Vanden Plas experience on the shelves towards the end of 2003, or possibly early 2004. In the meantime, Lill will be playing all the guitars on Elegy singer Ian Parry's third Consortium Project album, due to be recorded between January and February.

"Well, that's the plan for now. The only problem is that rehearsals for this *Nostradamus* play begin at the same time I'm supposed to be laying down the guitars. So, it will take some work to juggle my schedule so that it works for everyone. But, I will definitely be doing the Consortium Project, for sure." ☺



EVERGREY

Recreation Forthcoming!

Recreation Day, the fourth offering from progressive Swedish metallers Evergrey, is scheduled for release March 11. Tom S. Englund, the Scandinavian giant who fronts the band, as well as plays guitar, hints at what lies within the ten originals, an obscure cover and one compilation tune. "Me and Henrik Danhage (guitar) produced it. We had help in the mix from Fredrik Nordstrom, who has worked with like, every Swedish band. He has a lot of input in the final result, but the basic foundation was us. It's easily the best sounding Evergrey album. We just built a \$350,000 studio, right next to our rehearsal room, in Gothenburg, so we'll definitely produce again. Then, we'll have all the time in the world. It's a lot of work. It's fun, but you have to put the meal on the table."

The originals showcase a little something for everyone, from the opening aggression of 'The Great Deceiver' to an all acoustic 'Madness Caught Another Victim'. Throughout, keyboards play a significant, but not dominate role, most notable, serving as orchestral strings. "There are no real strings," admits Englund, "just good keyboards. It's too expensive to rent people at \$50 an hour and you need like 20 of them. It takes a while as well."

Suggesting budget constraints were not a problem, just something the band is keenly aware of, while producing *Recreation Day*, he continued, "both Henrik and Rikard (Zander, keyboards) are doing background vocals." The female voices on 'Darkest Hour' are courtesy of "my fiancé," deadpans Englund. "It's the same girl as on all our albums. I thought I'd give her a minute." No career aspirations though, as Tom relates. "I've got a child, so we need SOMEONE to be the mature adult."

The tracklisting includes 'I'm Sorry', a decade's old pop song by countrymen Dilba. Although it plagues the airwaves incessantly, the tune is virtually unknown outside Sweden, part of its allure for Evergrey. "I wanted more people outside Sweden to hear it, because it's just too great to be forgotten and it totally fits our sound. I've always wanted to do it and this time we had to, otherwise I'd have killed myself if someone else did it first!"

Closing the disc is 'Trilogy Of The Damned', until now unavailable outside the Japanese versions of *In Search Of Truth*, where it appeared as a bonus cut. Now it will see the light of day domestically and in Europe. "We had so many requests to put the song on the web (www.evergrey.net), or re-release it. Now it's there. It's made up of three (previously released) songs, 'As Light Is Our Darkness', 'Words Mean Nothing' and 'The Shocking Truth', but only with piano and vocals."

In other late-breaking news, bassist, Michael Hakansson, was in a tram accident in his home town of Gothenburg, Sweden on January 10th. Hakansson is a little banged up, but seems to be doing fine. Said Hakansson. "My back and neck are a bit fucked up at the moment but, as far as the doctors could see now, it doesn't look like any permanent damage." Watch for a full interview with Evergrey in an upcoming issue of BW&BK.

OPETH

Damnation Near Completion!

OPETH have finished putting the finishing touches on their next album, *Damnation*, at No Man's Land Studios in London. Steve Wilson (PORCUPINE TREE) has done a second mix of the album, due out in March 2003. The new material is said to be "nothing like anything we've ever done before" with a "strong '70s vibe both in material and production." Tracks on the release include: 'Windopane', 'In My Time Of Need', 'Death Whispered A Lullaby', 'Closure', 'Hope Leaves', 'To Rid The Disease', 'Ending Credits' and 'Weakness'. Travis Smith has nearly completed the artwork.

Meanwhile, Opeth's *Deliverance* album entered the US Billboard Heatseeker chart at #14 and is also charting in the UK, Sweden, Holland and other countries. The band recently completed a number of North American dates and will be on tour in Europe in February and March 2003. Rumoured support acts include NILE and MÄDÄR MÖRTEM. Another tour in support of the band's forthcoming *Damnation* album will follow and is expected to take place in unusual venues.

SLAYER

"Haven't Done A Fucking Thing!"

According to SLAYER guitarist Kerry King, the thrash legends' forthcoming album featuring the return of drummer Dave Lombardo will emerge later than sooner. "(We) haven't done a fucking thing," he says, admitting that the band took three months off after finishing its summer tour with SOULFLY and IN FLAMES.

As for a reunion with Lombardo, "it'll be cool," King says nonchalantly. "I'm anxious to play with anybody that's competent, and he's definitely proven that he is." He adds that he hopes the album will be released by year's end. "We'll see what we can get done. No promises, but we definitely want to slay on our wave of popularity. We want to get back out; we don't want people to forget."

Meanwhile, Slayer released their DVD, *War At The Warfield*, on February 11th. The live set was recorded at The Warfield in San Francisco on December 7th, 2001 and has the following tracklisting: 'Disciple', 'War Ensemble', 'Stain Of Mind', 'New Faith', 'Postmortem', 'Raining Blood', 'Hell Awaits', 'Here Comes The Pain', 'Die By The Sword', 'Dittohead', 'Bloodline', 'God Send Death', 'Dead Skin Mask', 'Seasons In The Abyss', 'Captor Of Sin', 'Mandatory Suicide', 'Chemical Warfare', 'South Of Heaven' and 'Angel Of Death'.

CONTROL DENIED

Chuck's Final Works To See The Light Of Day!

The late DEATH leader Chuck Schuldiner's mother, Jane Schuldiner, has revealed through the band's official website that the group's sophomore album, *When Machine And Man Collide*, will be released. The remaining members of the band, Steve DiGiorgio (bass), Tim Ayram (vocals), Shannon Hamm (guitar) and Richard Christy (drums) will finish work on the album over the next few months.

Says Jane: "Yes, the album is very definitely going to be released. We just have to very carefully choose which label will do it. The legal problems I spoke about are in the courts soon and after they are taken care of, we will be able to go ahead with it. As far as I'm concerned, this is the most important album ever. When I pleaded with Chuck to not play so long and hard, to rest more, he told me how important it was for him to keep on, to do his very best, and at times he struggled but he kept going. Remembering that, we are going through our own struggle to make sure that album is not only released, but that it be done correctly."

Previous reports have revealed that the drums and most of the guitars have been recorded. Says Steve DiGiorgio: "It's sad beyond belief that Chuck never saw the album to its completion. We will try our best to finish it in his honor, but will never know if it lives up to his standards. That's the least we can do for someone who gave so much and cared so much about what he did and how it affected those who believed as well."

Steve Booke on bass. The band will tour and record around the Halford schedule. The CD is being produced by Metal Mike and will be completed by spring. Guitarist Nick Savio has left Frontiers act WHITESKULL due to "musical differences"...

OMEN, featuring original guitarist/songwriter Kenny Powell, recently completed recording their new album, *Eternal Black Dawn*, due out through a yet-to-be-determined label. The album is a return to the classic Omen sound heard on the *Battle Cry* and *Warning Of Danger* albums. A European tour in support of the new album is also expected. In related news, Omen have inked a management deal with California based Jeff Keller Management. For additional info on the band, check out their website at www.omenlegion.com...

DIAMOND HEAD have nearly completed recording their new as-yet-untitled album. The set was produced by Andrew Scarth and recorded by Scarth and Mark Stuart at Mad Hat Studios. Mixing is currently underway. Tracks on the release will include 'Shine On Me', 'Forever I 6', 'Deep', 'The Ferryman' and 'Silverdaze'. Treks of both Europe and the US are being planned in support of the release. For more info go to: <http://www.diamond-head.net>...

Canada's **RECKON WITH ONE** have inked a deal with Galy Records. The band's new album, *The Purpose Of Existence*, is out now... **FU MANCHU** have inked a deal with Steamhammer/SPV for the European release of their upcoming double live CD, *Go For It - Live*, due out soon. The set was recorded on the US leg of the California Crossing tour in 2002 and will include about 22 songs spanning the band's 12 year history...

NECROBLASPHEME's new album, *Introducing Pure Violence*, is out now through Destructive Records... **VOIVOD** drummer Away will guest on the track 'Rock Anthropologists On The Kon-Tiki Voyage' on the new album from Montreal's **PARADISE**... According to the **SILENTIUM** website (www.listen.to/silentiun), vocalist Tanja Kemppainen (**SOULGRIND**, ex-**LULLACRY**) will supply guest vocals on the band's next album, *Harmatia de Prudence*. Tanja will perform the vocals that were originally to be sung by Tiina Lehtonen, who left the band recently for personal reasons...

SOULFORGE's *Duality* album is out now through GWN Records and is already due to be re-pressed. The band are working out details for some upcoming live dates in France and the Netherlands. A limited supply of Soulforge's debut MCD is currently available via www.profusiondirect.com... GWN have delayed the release of **DIVINA ENEMA**'s next album, *Under Phoenix Phenomenon*, due to mixing problems. A new release date will be set soon... Russian technical death metallers **MERLIN** are working on their next album for GWN, tentatively titled *Brutal Constructor*... **LULLACRY** are finishing up work on their new album, *Crucify My Heart*, due for release in Finland on February 17th, 2003. The first single, 'Don't Touch The Flame', will be out on January 13th. It includes a cover of **NINE INCH NAILS**' 'Head Like A Hole'...

MEDICATION have confirmed a string of European club dates that will run from February 10th to March 15th. Details will be posted at www.medicationmusic.com... Keyboardist Vitalij Kuprij has left **RING OF FIRE**. A reason for his departure was not given, but Ring Of Fire look forward to achieving its future goals as a band, and wish Vitalij the best of luck with his... **BLAZING ETERNITY** have titled their forthcoming album *A World To Drown In*. The album is due out via Prophecy Productions in March... **PENANCE** are in the studio recording their next album... **HYPOCRISY** are writing new material for their next album, with recording to begin in August for the early 2004 release...

Danish fusion metal band **MNEMIC** have inked a deal with Nuclear Blast. The band hits AntFarm Studio in March 2003 to record their debut album... **SEA OF GREEN** have a new website at www.seaofgreenrocks.com... **DARKANE** has been confirmed for next year's March Metal MeltDown V, set to take place March 7-8 in Asbury Park, NJ... **DARK MOOR** have recorded four tracks for a special release, due out on April 21st, 2003. The new album will include eight tracks in total, four of which were never released to the European market and were recorded during the Gates Of Oblivion and Hall Of The Olden Dreams sessions...

BRAZEN ABBOT's Nikolo Kotzev is back from Bulgaria with his Masters degree in Music Arts. In album news, the forthcoming *Brazen Abbot* album will be titled *Guilty As Sin*. Guests on the release include Joe Lynn Turner (ex-**RAINBOW**), Goran Edman (ex-**YNGWIE MALMSTEEN**), Jörn Lande (**MASTERPLAN**, ex-**ARK**), Mic Michaeli (ex-**EUROPE**), John Leven (ex-**EUROPE**) and Ian Haugland (ex-**EUROPE**). An early 2003 release is expected... **MELIAH RAGE** are now under contract to Screaming Ferret Wreckords. They are planning to release eight tracks that were recorded in 1992 under the title, *Unfinished Business*. The new disc will feature **GODSMACK**'s Sully Erna on drums...

NIGHTWISH drummer Jukka Nevalainen and keyboardist Tuomas Holopainen will be making a guest appearance on the new **SETHIAN** album, which features ex-**WIZZARD** frontman Tapio Wilksa. In related news, Nightwish guitarist Emmu Vuorinen will be joining **ALTARIA**, the melodic metal project featuring **SONATA ARCTICA** six-stringer Jani Liittainainen, as a touring guitarist when the band hits the road next year in support of their new album, *Foundation*... **STEEL ATTACK** are now working on their third album, *Predator Of The Empire*, at Sweden's Studio Underground. The album will be mastered by Mika Jussila at Finnvox Studio and cover artwork comes from J.Fourier. This is the band's first album with new singer Dick Johnson. An April 2003 release is expected... **SERAPHIM** have released their new album, *The Equal Spirit*... After a seven year break, Denmark's **INVOCATOR** have inked a deal with Scarlet and will release their new album shortly. The band now features vocalist/guitarist Jacob Hansen, bassist Carster Mikkelsen, guitarist Flemming Lund (ex-**AUTUMN LEAVES**) and drummer Jacob Gundel (ex-**WITHERING SURFACE**)... **LEADFOOT** had delayed the release of their forthcoming album, *We Drink For Free*, although it should be out as you read this. The band features former **COC** vocalist Karl Agell and bassist Phil Swisher... Sweden's **PLATITUDE** have signed to Scarlet. Their debut album, *Secrets Of Life*, includes the tracks 'Deception', 'Just One Try', 'Raining Tears', 'Love Lost', 'Secrets Of Life' and more. The album was recorded and mixed at Jailhouse Studios in Denmark with producer Tommy Hansen (**HELLOWEEN**, **PRETTY MAIDS**)... **STORMLORD** are currently writing songs for their new album. This is the band's first release with new second guitarist Gianpaolo Caprino. A November 2003 release is expected through Scarlet... **MAJESTIC** have broken up. Keyboardist Richard Andersson "decided to put the band on ice for a while." Andersson's new band is called **TIME REQUIEM**. He describes their music as "fast, tight, melodic and very powerful." The groups self-titled debut album is out now and the band hope to tour late this year and into next year. Members of Time Requiem include Andersson, bassist Dick Lovgren and former Majestic members Apollo Papatathanasio (vocals), Magnus Nord (guitar) and Peter Wildoer (drums)...

Jason from Australia's **ILIUM** recently dropped BW&BK a line with an update. The band have finished recording their debut album, *Sirens Of The Styx*, and plan to release the album in early 2003... **CANNIBAL CORPSE**'s *Worm Infested album* is available on limited edition (1,000 copies only) picture disc vinyl LP in Europe... **CONFESSOR** have regrouped and their branch-off group, **FLY MACHINE**, are no longer. The reformed Confessor features all of the original members except for Iman Colon, who passed away last year. In the beginning of 2003 Earache is releasing a Confessor compilation made up of the album *Condemned*, the Confessor EP and some live tracks recorded at London's Astoria on the *Gods Of Grind Tour*. The band will also record a new demo in the next few months that will be shipped to labels. Some US tour dates are being scheduled for next year... **PISSING RAZORS** have added guitarist Matt Difabio, formerly of **SINGLE BULLET THEORY**. The band is currently in the studio writing new material for the next album due out next month... **PEGAZUS** are preparing a VHS/DVD release for next year... **ARTENSION**'s new album, *New Discovery*, will be out as you read this through Frontiers/Now & Then. The band line-up includes: Vitalij Kuprij (keyboards), Kevin Chown (bass), Mike Terrana (drums), John West (vocals) and Roger Staffebach (guitar). Says Kuprij: "I have no doubt that we will succeed with this record, as we will embark on our first major tour to support our new album"...

LOUDNESS did a one-off gig on October 25th in Tokyo to promote their new album, *Biosphere*, and filmed a new live DVD which will be released this month. It will mark their fourth DVD release in less than two years (!). The band rang in the New Year at the Rock Legends Countdown Festival in Tokyo alongside **EARTHSHAKER** and other Japanese metal bands... **POISONBLACK** was formed two years ago by **SENTENCED**' frontman Villi Laihia with bassist Janne Kukkonen. The group's debut album, *Escapexstasy* will be released this month. Vocals on the album come from **CHARON**'s J.P. Leppaluoto. Says Laihia: "I knew his voice would fit perfectly and add a certain kind of dark yet melodic feeling to our music"...

MALEVOLENT CREATION will go straight to Europe to join **MARDUK** for a full tour in March and April. They will then join the No Mercy Festivals for 13 shows, which will also feature **NUCLEAR ASSAULT**, **TES-TAMENT** and others. The band have also been confirmed for Vacken 2003... The reformed **VIO-LENCE** are looking to enter the studio in early 2003 to begin work on their forthcoming album, due out late next Spring or in early Summer. The band's guitarist Phil Demmel recently posted the following update: "I've got ideas for five songs. Just need to structure them out and add a few 'VIO' twists then I'll sit down with Sean and add some words. The new stuff is definitely in the Eternal

MONUMENTUM

Wounded Love

by Chris Bruni

Considered to be one of the most enigmatic underground cult entities in the scene, Italy's avant-garde darkwave pioneers Monumentum have finally shattered the seven year silence that has hovered since their marvelous debut album, 1995's In Absentia Christi, with their latest release Ad Nauseam.

After long delays, line-up changes, and inspirational drives hitting specific lows, Monumentum have returned triumphant in the most subtle of manners, *Ad Nauseam* still maintaining that claustrophobic Monumentum unease, while tackling new darkness and despair.

"The main purpose of this new album was to try and actually write songs," begins Monumentum maestro Roberto Mammarella (who also respectively runs the prestigious Avantgarde/Wounded Love label). "Plus realistically I could say that out of those seven years of silence, the new album took two and a half years to write and record. It's not that we really took seven years to make an album (laughs). I must say that after the first album, I got a couple of years of hangover," laughs Roberto. "I was really fed up with it and I didn't want to engage myself with such a venture again. I was also quite unconfident on what I could do with a new album. So I unconsciously decided to keep silent instead of doing some quick thing that would mean nothing."

I'm sure you had many labels knocking on your door.

"I got quite a few labels interested and I got some contracts actually, obviously from metal labels. But it would have been stupid for me to sign a contract without having any music and without knowing what the album was going to sound like. So incidentally Satyr from Satyricon was in Milan, we had dinner, and he was asking me about the band and I told him the situation. I don't know why he was interested but he was enthusiastic about it and wanted to approach a different market with Moonfog. So he was not afraid to release it. Then I got a completely different telephone call where he said that the album was too different, so the best thing was to switch from Moonfog to Tatra which is anyway related to them."

Did you ever ponder releasing the new Monumentum yourself on Avantgarde?

"No. I don't like that idea actually." Monumentum have been quite active in the underground since the late '80s, but have only two full-length albums. How would you explain the unique phenomenon that makes Monumentum?

"That's something amazing and hard for myself to explain," says Roberto. "Much of this



depended on the fact that Euronymous from Mayhem was interested in the band and originally I had been talking with him for a couple of years to release *In Absentia Christi* on DSP. So at the time he was telling all these people about this Italian band called Monumentum. So it started to create this cult following which was cultivated later because I was in the scene as well. So you can say that this is a band that made people talk more than the music they made (laughs)."

"The purpose of the band at the time was that we wanted to make something in the style that Celtic Frost did with *Into The Pandemonium*, sort of this avant-garde doom metal. In reality I don't see that much doom metal in *In Absentia Christi*; there's some of it in there, but it's not a doom metal album; it was spontaneous. With the new album, it wasn't spontaneous. I just forced myself to do something different. Much of that sound, feeling and atmosphere happened in the studio with the first album... It was one of those things that would be impossible to repeat. I must confess that everything really happened by magic. The atmosphere... the longing throughout all the songs is really something magical."

"I would say that the first album had this biblical, holy... like something sacred, very religious, symbolic. I usually say that the difference between the two albums is like the difference between reading books of philosophy (the first album), and looking at real life and people in the eyes. But the feeling of despair and spiritual forgiveness... it is still there..." ☸

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY To Hell And Black!

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY's new album, *The Blessed Hellride*, will feature a special guest vocal performance from OZZY OSBOURNE. Ozzy appears on the track 'Stillborn'. Convinced he has recorded a hit, Ozzy told BLS leader ZAKK WYLDE: "If this is not a hit record, you should just pack up and quit!" Ozzy was quite impressed with the full album and told Zakk: "You are going to rule the world!" *The Blessed Hellride* is out through Spitfire in April and features the following tracks: 'Stoned & Drunk', 'Doomsday Jesus', 'Stillborn' (feat. Ozzy Osbourne - first single), 'Suffering Overdue', 'The Blessed Hellride', 'Funeral Bell', 'Final Solution', 'Destruction Overdrive', 'Blackend Waters', 'We Live No More' and 'Dead Meadow'.

Meanwhile, BLS's forthcoming DVD, *Broozed, Boozed & Broken-Boned: Live With The Detroit Chapter*, will be released in March and features footage from the band's performance at Harpo's Concert Theater in Detroit, MI on Sep. 14, 2002.

Zakk is also going to be talking with Ozzy about the possibility of a new Ozzy record for 2003 and he recently worked with DEREK SHERINIAN on Derek's next solo recording. Zakk plays on three songs, 'Fear Of Flying' (with YNGWIE MALMSTEEN), '20 Years Gone' (dedicated to Randy Rhoads) and 'Time To Die'. The CD will be released in April. For more info on this release go to www.dereksherinian.com.

Finally, BLS have announced a string of Japanese live shows. April 17 and 18 Black Label Society will be performing at Club Quattro in Tokyo, and April 19, BLS will be live at Club Quattro in Osaka.

JOHN ARCH Twists His Fate Beyond FATES WARNING!

Former FATES WARNING frontman JOHN ARCH has inked a solo deal with Metal Blade. His forthcoming EP, *A Twist Of Fate*, will run about 25 minutes and will feature Arch on vocals, Jim Matheos on guitar, Joey Vera on bass and Mike Portnoy on drums.

Arch comments on the project: "I think the music has a good feel to it. There are a lot of elements of the old Fates present but it doesn't sound retro '80s thanks in part to the newer recording technology but also the combined influences of Jim, Mike and Joey. The fans who take the time to read through the lyrics should find them challenging but yet brutally honest at times. The lyrics are somewhat personal but I have a feeling everyone can relate at some level. I hope fans new and old will like it. The guys are now completing the final recordings and when it is, expect nothing short of sheer genius from these master musicians!"

SIX FEET UNDER "Hey You Sick Fucks!"

SIX FEET UNDER leader Chris Barnes posted an update at the band's website (www.sfu420.com) recently. The band are set to release the *Double Dead Redux* CD/DVD on January 28. They are also confirmed for two European festivals: With Full Force in Germany and Graspop in Belgium.

Barnes had the following to add: "Six Feet Under is currently beginning to write our next CD. We've got some great ideas for this next release and are really gonna concentrate on making this the best CD we've put out - for real! Other than that, I don't wanna give too much away. You'll have to wait for the final product! Recording is slated for March 2003. We'll be heading into Morrisound Studios here in Tampa, FL to begin tracking the drums and guitar. Vocals will be tracked in Miami as well as the mix. Right now, we're going over our options as far as producers. Metal Blade is looking at a summer release date for the CD. We'll let you know more as we get things movin'... That's it for now. Take care and remember... Burn on ... not out!!"

SACRIFICE Forward To Reformation?!

Original SACRIFICE members Rob Urbinati, Gus Pynn and Scott Watts reformed briefly for a jam session in Toronto (at RAZOR drummer Rob Mills' home studio) and there is rumor that the band will reform to play a couple of final shows sometime this year. Urbinati told Germany's *Voices From The Darksides* that "It was fun, even though we all had trouble remembering the stuff."

Sacrifice recently regained the rights to their first three records: *Torment In Fire* (Fringe 1985), *Forward To Termination* (Fringe 1987) and *Soldiers Of Misfortune* (Metal Blade 1991). The band are looking to reissue the titles in 2003, but have yet to strike a deal with a label. Also, there are rumours that the threesome are considering working on new material as well. In the meantime, Pynn and Mills have a new band called THREETARDS and have written ten songs.

HELLOWEEN

March To A Different Beat!

According to the **HELLOWEEN** website, www.halloween.org, **MOTORHEAD** drummer Mikkey Dee will fill in for Mark Cross on the recording of the band's new album. A posting on the band's website reads: "It is very unfortunate to announce that Mark Cross could not complete all recordings on the album, due to the malicious (EBV) Epstein-Barr virus also known as Mononucleosis, which had struck him this September. He'll need at least four, five months of recovery. The symptoms of this virus are very dangerous and can leave serious marks in your health. It first destroys your entire immune system and leaves you no energy. Therefore Mark is still too weak to do any kind of intense activities at the moment and strictly needs to rest by the doctor's orders. We all agreed on having Motorhead's Mickey Dee as the replacement for the recordings only! To avoid possible rumours, Mark Cross remains the drummer in Helloween and we're looking forward for the tour next year."

Meanwhile, Cross posted the following message at his website, www.mcross.com: "Well, for the first time in my life, I have to admit that something knocked me out and forced me to take a serious rest, a thing I'm not really used to, since I'm a very energetic kind of guy. My heart is bleeding for the decisions being made right now and for not being able to give my full performance on the Helloween production, a very, very inconvenient time but that's life. The good thing is, that I'm already feeling much better, though I know that it's still gonna take a while to get 100% back on my feet again and be able to jump and bang around like a madman!"

Meanwhile, the band have set a May 5 European release date through Nuclear Blast Records. It is currently being mixed by producer Charlie Bauerfeind at Mi Sueno studio in Tenerife, Spain. A North American release date has yet to be announced. The CD is being described in an official press release as "a real back-to-the-roots album."

GRAVE DIGGER

As Good As Gold!

GRAVE DIGGER have announced that Rheingold is the title for their forthcoming CD, due on May 26th through Nuclear Blast Records. The band posted the following at their official website, www.grave-digger.de.

"The concept is following the Saga of the Nibelungs. We worked out The Ring Of The Nibelungs from Germany's famous composer Richard Wagner. The record is split in four parts as there are: Rheingold, Valkyrie, Triumph-Glory-Agony and Twilight of the Gods. These are the four operas of the Ring Of The Nibelungs. It's a very mystical story based on the old German saga of the Nibelungs. We worked also with some melody lines of the operas. The music includes all typical Grave Digger trademarks like simple and epic melody lines, aggressive vocals, guitars like chainsaws and a pounding rhythm section. You will see Dwarfs, Nymphs, Maidens, Giants, Swords, Dragons, Heroes, a golden Treasure, Liars, Murderer and of course Love, Death and Agony appear in the lyrical concept. Rheingold will have 10 songs and an intro. The digipak will have one more song based also on the concept story. It's not a cover version!"

Rheingold was recorded at Principal Studios near Muenster, and was produced by The Resetti Brothers and Grave Digger frontman Chris Boltendahl.

SILENT FORCE

Third Time's A Charm

According to guitarist Alex Beyrodt, 20 songs have been written and demoed for **SILENT FORCE**'s third album, currently sitting in his computer waiting to be recorded.

"With the next album we're focusing even more on the melodies," says Beyrodt. "It will still be very heavy, but we're going to put an end to the Judas Priest/Rob Halford comparisons. I'm tired of that, you know? DC (Cooper - singer) has a unique voice and he can do all that Halford stuff, but there's no reason for that to be the focus. So, we're focusing on writing the best songs for our singer, concentrating on the vocal lines and the melodies. But, we're not sacrificing the heavy aspect of the music. Out of the 20 songs we've written, 12 of them are up-tempo double bass tracks, so you get the idea of where we're going."

In the meantime, Beyrodt and Cooper can be heard on a new rock opera album called *Missa Mercuria*, a prog rock-flavoured outing that also features members of Vanden Plas, Pink Cream 69 and Edenbridge.

Nightmare vein, but with more riffs"... Italian Progressive metallers **KINGCROW** have announced that their new vocalist is Mauro Gelsomini (ex-**WINDSEEKER**). The band is working on new tracks and soon will enter the studio to record a new CD. They are also preparing a live set list with songs from the *Something Unknown* album. For more on this band go to: www.kingcrow.it/... **KING DIAMOND** bassist Hal Patino has teamed up with **MERCYFUL FATE** members Hank Sherman (guitar) and Bjarne T. Holm (drums) for a new as-yet-unnamed project. The new group are soon to record a demo at **KONKHRA** frontman Anders Lundemark's studio in Denmark. Lundemark will produce the demo... The fourth annual 2000 Decibel Festival will be held in Bengtsfors, Sweden (180 km north of Gothenburg) on May 17th. Confirmed bands include: **AMON AMARTH**, **GARDENIAN**, **DIMENSION ZERO**, **DIONYSUS**, **THE PROJECT HATE**, **SEVENTH ONE**, **PATHOS** and **TALISMAN**. For more info visit www.mfdecibel.com... **FATES WARNING** guitarist Frank Aresti's new project, **DRAGONSPORN**, have released their debut album via Hook N' Mouth Records... **ATROCITY** have announced that their new guitarist is Sebastian Schult (ex-**FROM THY ASHES**). He was recently on tour with the band in Mexico and is now working on new songs with them. "I'm already looking forward to recording the new album and kicking some ass! The first ideas sound very promising already and I have a lot of fun working on the new songs," says Schult... **INIQUITY** will release a compilation/best of album in March that will feature both brand new songs, old, previously unreleased promo/demo/live material and a wide selection of the band's best songs. *Iniquity Bloody Iniquity* will include a thick booklet with lots of photos, flyers, etc... **ANASARCA** are busy writing material for their third album, *Terrorized*. It will be released next September... **ENTER MY SILENCE** are back with a handful of new songs. The band is in the studio recording the follow-up to last year's *Remotecontrolled Scythe*... **NIGHTMARE** are currently writing new material for their fourth full-length studio album. They plan to enter Soundsuite Studio in March to join forces with Norwegian producer Terje Refsnes... Napalm Records have inked deals with **WELENBRAND** and **GOLDEN DAWN**... **VOID OF SILENCE**'s new singer is Alan Nemtheanga (ex-**PRIMORDIAL**). The band is now ready to start the creative process for their new album, due out on Code666. Their official website can be found at: www.dauphins.com/void... **AGHORA**'s new album, *Formless*, will be released soon through Code666. It features new drummer Richard Komatz and new bassist Andy DeLuca (ex-**SYMPHONY X**)... **TOOL** have been filming their recent live shows in the US with plans to release a DVD from the footage... On January 28th, Crash Music released **UNEARTHLY**'s US debut, *Infernum-Prelude To A New Reign*. The band hail from Brazil and were voted as "possible revelation band for 2002" by the chief editor of Rock Brigade Magazine... **PRIMAL FEAR**'s Ralf Scheepers married his long-time girlfriend, Anja, on November 22nd. The ceremony took place in Germany. The newlyweds have a son, Marc, who is four months old... Massacre Records' **HEAVENWOOD** began recording in January... **HEARSE** will soon release their debut album, *Dominion Reptilian*, through Hammerheart. The album was recorded over four weeks in the summer of 2002 at Dog Pound Audio (**ENTOMBED**, **TERRA FIRMA**) with studio tech Jonas Edler. Tracks on the release will include 'Cosmic Daughter', 'Rapture In Twilight', 'End Of Days' and 'Dominion Reptilian'... **DEMON OF DIRT** bassist Pontus Jonsson recently left the band. Parties interested in replacing Pontus can email Magnus Olsson at demonsofdirt@urme.com. The band will enter the studio this month to begin recording their next album... **MORFADE** began recording their next album in January at Los Angered Recording with producer Andy LaRoque... **MASTERPLAN**'s first single, 'Enlighten Me', has entered the German singles chart at #15. The band, featuring ex-**HELLOWEEN** guitarist Roland Grapow, ex-**HELLOWEEN** drummer Uli Kusch and former **YNGWIE MALMSTEEN/ARK** singer Jorn Lande, released their self-titled debut on January 20th through AFM Records... Sweden's **SKYFIRE** have finished recording their new album, *Mind Revolution*. The set was recorded at Abyss Studios and produced by Tommy Tagtgren. Skyfire bassist Jonas Sjogren says to expect "a more diverse, better structured and even better sounding album"... After releasing their debut album nearly ten years ago through Black Widow Records, **CRYSTAL PHOENIX** are back with their second album, *Twa Jirg-J-Draak Saga*, also being released through Black Widow. The fantasy/sci-fi album is divided into two parts which symbolize the past and future with music ranging from hard rock to acoustic moods with baroque echoes... **SHADOWS FALL**'s *The Art Of Balance* was released in Europe on January 27th as a luxurious

2CD digipak which includes the track 'Thoughts Without Words' as videoclip enhancement, the biography, a 50 picture photo gallery, a video interview, diverse links and three live performances... **ALABAMA THUNDERPUSSY** recently contacted BW&BK with an update. The band have completed the video for the track 'Motor-Ready' with director Cale Bunker. The clip is on the way to Relapse where it will be distributed through proper channels and will begin airing soon. Also, a limited edition picture disc vinyl version of the band's *Staring At The Divine* album is available through Relapse with a bonus 7" single that includes the track 'Litha'. The band are currently writing new material and are planning details for upcoming live shows including the upcoming Relapse festival... **MEGADETH**'s *Rude Awakening* DVD has been certified gold in the US (25,000 units) and Canada (5,000)... **APOCALYPTICA** have posted a new track, 'No Education', for free download at www.musicline.de. The song is pulled off the forthcoming *Reflections* CD that features a guest appearance by **SLAYER** drummer Dave Lombardo. Lombardo guests on a total of five tracks on the all-instrumental album, which was due on February 10 in Europe and the 17th in Canada. Following the release of the album, the band will begin a tour of Germany. The dates run from February 19th at the Jolly Jaker in Braunschweig through March 20th at E-Werk in Köln... **SEPULTURA** began working on the pre-production for their new album recently with producer Steve Evetts (Nation, Revolusongs) at AR Studios in Rio de Janeiro. Twelve new songs were set to be recorded in January. A close source commented about the material: "Heavy stuff, HEAVY! Some fast, some slow but always aggressive. Sepultura will definitely surprise you in 2003!" Watch for the record this summer through SPV/Steamhammer in Europe, JVC in Japan, and FNM/Universal in Brazil. A North American deal is still pending. Meanwhile, the band's cover EP, *Revolusongs*, is out in Japan and Brazil (North America will follow shortly). The band recently shot a video in Sao Paulo, Brazil for the **U2** cover 'Bullet In The Blue Sky'... Aside from European Festival appearances, **BLIND GUARDIAN** have begun work on their forthcoming live CD, due out later this year... Complete with recently returned original vocalist Johan Lindstrand, **THE CROWN** are currently working on the follow-up to *Crowned In Terror*, due out next summer. Bassist Magnus Olsfelt posted the following recently: "This time we are heading for the ultimate and so far it sounds very promising. The new material is pretty diverse but in general the songs have more POWER. Hard-hitting and straight-forward, with more natural flow, so that the energy and force comes straight back to you. Some titles are: 'No Tomorrow', 'Face Of Destruction/Deep Hit Of Death', 'Are You Morbid?', 'Cold Is The Grave', 'Kill 'Em All', 'Natashead Overdrive', 'Dawn Of Emptiness', 'Crown Of Thorns'. Their European tour kicked off on January 22nd at Tavastia in Helsinki, Finland and wraps up on April 6th at Effenaar in Eindhoven, The Netherlands... **EXCITER** have confirmed that their new bassist is Paul Champagne, completing the line-up of recently acquired vocalist, Rob Degroot, guitarist John Ricci and drummer Rik Charron. Guitarist John Ricci told BW&BK that the band have begun writing new material for a record that may appear late this year through Osmose. Ricci says that European promoters have been asking for the band to return to the Festival circuit next summer and there is a rumour that a fall 2003 tour with **RAVEN** and **ANVIL** may happen. But he stresses that this is all speculation... **QUEENSRYCHE**'s new album has been pushed back until April 14th due to "problems in the recording phase." **QUEENSRYCHE** guitarist Michael Wilton spoke to Music Insight recently and offered his views on the forthcoming album: "I believe this album should be hard and intense, but what I have heard so far is not that. I have no desire to change Queensryche into an adult contemporary band. This should be a Queensryche album and not a Geoff Tate solo album. I love the hard aggressive music, but I think those days are dwindling in Queensryche." The band have also lined-up the following European dates for June: 6/04/03 Heineken Music Hall - Amsterdam, Holland, 6/05/03 Astoria Theater - London, England and 6/08/03 Sweden Rock Festival - Solvesborg, Sweden... **AGENT STEEL** have posted studio clips (for three new tracks: 'Avenger', 'Earth Under Lucifer', 'Human Bullet') at www.agentsteelonline.com from their forthcoming record, tentatively titled *Order Of The Illuminati - Agent Steel 4*. The band hope to mix and master soon... Singer **DORO PESCH** was involved in a car accident recently and had to cancel the final three shows on her Fight tour. She is expected to make a full recovery and has lined up a string of German dates in March... On February 18, **NASTY SAVAGE** return with their *Way of Mayhem* CD on Crook'd Records. This release includes their original four song demo from 1983 plus two brand new tracks recorded in 2002. Two of the four original demos, 'Witches



sHEAVY

by Alex S. Johnson

CANUCK DOOMSTERS GET SYNCHRONIZED!

The buzz from Rise Above, Sheavy's record label, had Steve Hennessey (the Man with Ozzy's Voice) scripting 'a desert island porn movie.' About the only truth to that blurb, according to Hennessey, lies in the movie-scripting part - the rest may be label hype, a wet dream, or both. "It's more of a serious film than anything else," says the Dallas, Texas-based singer: "It's about a road trip from here to El Paso, Texas - my first foray into anything like independent filmmaking." (Hennessey does aspire to make "a Russ Myers-type film after this," which may have sparked the sleaze rumors.)

Besides indie flicks, Hennessey's main gig has him writing computer programs; and then, of course, there's the band he fronts, Sheavy (pronounced like "Chevy") which has just released a third full-length album, titled *Synchronized*, fulfilling their contract with Rise Above.

A Mike Butcher production (he's the man who brought the world Sabbath Bloody Sabbath and Sabotage), *Synchronized* sees the light a full year after being recorded in Belgium. Hennessey credits Eric Lemasters at Music Cartel as being "very instrumental in getting this album finished." The hang-up? "We had endless delays with different bad luck-type things, Spinal Tap stuff. Rise Above messed up too. They sent the CD to the manufacturer with the artwork with 11 songs, and the CD came back with ten. We sent the artwork away to this guy in New York, and he disappeared. Nobody can find him! Dan (Moore, guitarist) whipped up some cover art on two days' notice. Eric said, 'Listen guys, we need

to get this album out before Christmas."

Synchronized ladles prominent keyboards into Sheavy's patented brand of doom metal. "Mike suggested we could add some analog synth, and Keith (Foley, bass) can play some synths; that's how we came up with the intro and the little synth part in 'Ultraglide' and the whole concept of using the synth for 'Synchronized'. It really makes the song jump out at you."

Comparing *Synchronized* to Sheavy's 1999 release *The Electric Sleep*, Hennessey says, "The production on the new album is way better - we went digital, we went to a really good studio, and the next time Mike comes here to North America, we'll do something here - if I can get the guys motivated to come down here, or if I can get \$40,000 in student loans paid off!" (note: Keith Foley still lives in Sheavy's place-of-origin, Edmonton, while Moore and drummer Ren Squires, who pens most of the band's music, reside in Newfoundland.)

While electronics play a bigger part on the new album, Sheavy's songs still critique technology, with tunes like 'Part Of The Machine' and the title track echoing 'Virtual Machine' and 'The Electric Sleep' from the previous disc. "I never bought a cell phone till this year," says Hennessey, who still drives a '72 El Camino. "But I have friends who never want to go out, just hang out on the chat line! At the same time, the Internet has been a wonderful thing. I don't know what we did before. It's a real quandary. I do have some problems with technology even though I embrace it in my life." ☺

DISMEMBER - Missile Of Hate!

DISMEMBER are currently working in the Stockholm-based SAMI studio on their new album, *Where IronCroses Grow*. The album will be released in Europe in September via Hammerheart. The recordings are produced by Dismember drummer Fred Estby, assisted by studio-engineer Olle Sandqvist. Tracks on the release include 'Tragedy Of The Faithful', 'Sword Of Light' and the title track. According to Estby the new material will be darker, a little less melodic and more aggressive than ever. Lyrically vocalist Matti Karkki heads in the direction of describing war at its ugliest, with stories about sick minds creating sick situations and loads of religious criticism.

Says Fred: "We are looking forward to launching this missile of hate upon the world."

CELTIC FROST "Ten Songs Complete!"

From the message board at the official Celtic Frost website (www.celticfrost.com), mainman Tom Gabriel Fischer continues to update inquisitive fans about the progress made on the long overdue, new album.

"The vocals to about ten songs have been completed, with a further six to eight still to follow until spring. The vocal styles used so far are very wide-ranging, more so than ever before on any CF album. I have not yet used the exact same 'tragic' vocals as on *Into the Pandemonium*, but I would like to do that very much. I have always liked them a lot. We have experimented with such vocals on a couple of songs, but later found that other vocals fit these particular songs better. There are some lead vocals, however, which are rather closely related to the 'tragic' style."

"The songs so far completed feature vocals which range from extremely heavy to utterly fragile and intimate. There are a lot of parallels to the original first three CF albums, but also a few more modern ideas. For example, we have explored the vocal style used for the back-up vocals in 'The Inevitable Factor' from *Into the Pandemonium* and have used it for lead vocals. There are also quite a few female vocal tracks, one of them a duet between our now regular female singer Simone Vollenweider and myself. We didn't really plan on using so much 'female color,' it simply happened, as the songs grew over the past couple of years. We also decided that we should be able to use female vocals regardless of everyone else doing it, too, since we were among the first to incorporate such vocals into heavier music. Simone is not an opera singer, although I'm sure she has the capability to do that, too. Her vocals, as used by CF, are very melodic and extremely feminine. She has sung harmonies and back-ups for us, along with the above mentioned duet with me on one new song. We first worked with her during the recording sessions of *Apollyon Sun* demos in 1999/2000. Simone will do further work with CF in the future, and it is very likely she will accompany CF onstage as well."

"One of the biggest new things for us all is the fact that Martin has so far sung the lead vocals for two songs, and that he shares lead vox with me on one further song ('Human Dirt'). More might follow. His vocal style is very heavy and sick. There are no Cold Lake-type vocals, though. As of this past weekend, a very small, select group of music industry contacts have now heard select pre-production recordings from the new CF album here in London - the very first time anybody outside of the band has been given access to the new material."

"At this point, everything is still financed from within the band, to the point of complete financial ruin for me personally, and we have not yet put our signatures under a contract (although a negotiated recording deal is ready and on the table). But the reactions to the new music have so far been overwhelming and extremely enthusiastic, and we are very happy. Still, it will be the CF fans who are going to make the final decision." Tom Gabriel Fischer, London, England - Dec. 17, 2002

ICED EARTH Ink Deal With SPV/Steamhammer!

ICED EARTH have inked a deal with SPV/Steamhammer. The band, Jon Schaffer (guitar), Matthew Barlow (vocals), Larry Tarnowski (guitar) and Richard Christy (drums), will begin recording their new album, *The Glorious Burden*, in March with a release date set for September.

In regard to his signing a worldwide deal with SPV/Steamhammer, ICED EARTH founder/guitarist, Jon Schaffer says, "My only concern is the States, but they are committed to making a name for themselves here and with us in their roster it can only help. They did a great job on the *Demons & Wizards* album, treating Hansi (Kursch, D&W vocalist/Blind Guardian) and I like gold. I'm really looking forward to this. The future looks good."

As for the follow-up to *Horror Show*, Schaffer adds: "Now that the deal is finally done, studio arrangements are being made. We are getting a later start than I wanted but that's rock 'n' roll. The record is coming along very well, I'm really into this one, and it's going to be great. It's funny how things morph and change as the writing moves along. You can expect *The Glorious Burden* to be an album based on lots of history and some deep personal stuff. From the American Revolution, the Civil War, Waterloo (Napoleonic Wars), Attila the Hun to WW1 fighter ace Manfred Freiherr Von Richthofen aka The Red Baron, we're covering a lot of very cool and tragic historical periods. This will be a very unique and special record. I really wanted to challenge myself on this record lyrically and musically. Most of my songs have been about dark fantasy and sci-fi or horror, but this is a challenge because we are focusing on real life and often very tragic events, so in a way it's new for Iced Earth."

Following the recent 18th anniversary of the band, Schaffer says that "it was about time to have a book published about the Iced Earth story. Bill Murphy will be writing it and obviously I will be very involved in this undertaking. I want this to be an inspirational book that will show people that there's nothing you can't accomplish when you give it your all. A strong work ethic, realistic short term and long term goals, honesty and balls will get you whatever it is you seek."

STRATOVARIUS

Illegal Downloading Disturbs Tolkki!

STRATOVARIUS guitarist Timo Tolkki recently commented about people uploading and downloading the band's forthcoming album, *Elements Pt. 1*, due out January 27th through Nuclear Blast. "I just got back from the promo tour and received the news that it's on the net already," he posted on the Official Stratovarius Forum. "I have taken the necessary steps to find out the persons who have put it there. I have contacted our lawyer and the internet department of the Helsinki police. We will find those people who did this and they will face a court case for sure. They are transmitting internationally copyrighted material without permission. It is morally wrong and illegal because of the copyright."

Nuclear Blast Germany have released a limited edition boxed version of the album. The 2CD set comes in a box with a 3D cover and includes a booklet, sticker and bonus CD-Rom. In tour news, the band have added dates in Russia and Greece to their touring schedule. The dates are: May 2nd - USZ Druzhba, Lushniki - Moscow, Russia and May 4th - Rhodon Club - Athens, Greece.

CHILDREN OF BODOM

Hanging With Halford!

Hate Crew Deathroll, the new razor-edged platter from CHILDREN OF BODOM, has been receiving a large amount of hype since its release in Finland - the band's homeland - at the beginning of January, and the same scenario will likely play out when it hits the rest of the world in March. The band's first chance to bring the music directly to the fans will be in February as the opening act for HALFORD in Japan, an honour and opportunity that isn't lost on COB founder/guitarist/throat Alexi Laiho.

"Of course it's a big deal for us," says Laiho. "We get to open up for THE Metal God; it's totally awesome. We were offered the chance to tour with Halford by his management, and the thing is we were going to go to Japan anyway, but if we open up for him we get to play in front of a lot more people... a lot of those people have never heard Children Of Bodom. The promotional value is so huge that it would be stupid to pass it up. And, plus, it's just too cool. We have to do it. We're only doing six gigs so I don't know if we'll get the chance to meet the guy, but we're gonna try (laughs)."

Laiho reveals that the band will once again be filming live footage while in Japan, with tentative ideas for a full-blown DVD being thrown around. There is absolutely no guarantee that anything will surface before the next album, though.

"We have a shitload of live material, plus tons of footage of us being drunk and stupid and acting like four-year-olds, but we want to get more hardcore stuff together before we put a DVD out. We don't want it to be just one gig and a fucking boring interview about the studio sessions. Stuff like Skid Row's Oh Say Can You Scream video... that's cool, that's what we want to do. We're going to take bits from everywhere and mix it all together, so the quality won't be as good as if we filmed a gig with ten fucking cameras and tons of pyro, but that's not the point for us."

Meanwhile, Hate Crew Deathroll, has entered Finland's album chart at #1. The album came out in Japan through Universal on February 5th, and will be released in Sweden through Universal's Stockholm Records on March 10th and in Germany through Universal's Motor Music on March 17th. The band's European tour with SOILWORK begins on April 18th in Stockholm, SWE at Lilla Arenan and runs until May 19 in Osnabrock, GER at Hyde Park. They are also confirmed to appear at the 17th annual South By Southwest Music Festival (SXSW), set to be held March 12-16 in Austin, Texas.

EIDOLON

Begin Work On New Record!

EIDOLON drummer Shawn Drover gave BW&BK the following update regarding work on new material. "We have begun to record the follow-up to the Coma Nation record, which will be called *Apostles Of Defiance*. We have 75 minutes of material, though not all of the material will be on the record - one or two songs will be put away for the 2004 record - we just came up with more than enough material this time. Some song titles include 'Apostles Of Defiance', 'Final Descent' and 'Twisted Morality'. The release date is slated for September, 2003, through Metal Blade/Skyscraper music. Meanwhile, the band have been added to the 2003 Wacken Festival roster.

Sabbath' and 'Savage Desire', have never been released while 'XXX' and 'Unchained Angel' are much different than the re-recorded versions. The two new tracks are 'Wage Of Mayhem' (Part One) and 'Sardonic Mosaic'. The band have now regrouped for a brand-new album that will also see the light of day this year... **VIRGIN STEELE's** three-hour set at The Downtown (on December 21st) in Long Island was filmed and recorded for an upcoming live DVD... **RONDELLUS'** upcoming **BLACK SABBATH** tribute album *Sabbatum* features the Estonian band playing a dozen songs in medieval style. Track list: 'Verres Militares' ('War Pigs'), 'Oculi Filii' ('Junior's Eyes'), 'Funambulus Domesticus' ('A National Acrobat'), 'Symptoma Mundi' ('Symptom Of The Universe'), 'Post Murum Somnii' ('Behind The Wall Of Sleep'), 'Post Aeternitatem' ('After Forever'), 'Magus' ('The Wizard'), 'Solitudo' ('Solitude'), 'Rotae Confusionis' ('Wheels Of Confusion'), 'Planetarum Vagatio' ('Planet Caravan'), 'Via Gravis' ('Hard Road'), 'Architectus Urbis Caelestis' ('Spiral Architect'). See www.sabbatum.com/ and www.music-cartel.com/ for more... **DREAMLAND**, the Gothenburg-based outfit formerly known as **INFINITY** (name changed as not to be confused with the Spanish band signed to Drakkar) is circulating 'Falling Higher', a single bearing the backing vocals of **HAMMERFALL** tandem, Joacim Cans and Oscar Dronjak. The track was recorded at Cans' home studio and while Dreamland have signed to Cans Metal Heart Music, for publishing, the foursome (who have graced the stages of Sweden Rock and other festivals in their homeland) are currently looking for a deal... **NASUM** are recording the third album, *Helvete*, (Hell in English) due out in April/May. As well, some time during the first half of the year a split 10" EP with Nasum and **NAPALM DEATH** will be released on FETO Records (Napalm's own label)... **INCANTATION** are set to embark on a seven-date Australian tour in June 2003... **IRON MAIDEN** drummer Nicko McBrain stated recently that his project with former **ANTHRAX** guitarist Dan Spitz and ex-**MEGADETH** bassist Dave Ellefson is a "work in progress" that is in the very early stages and will be explored further once Maiden completes its forthcoming album/tour... According to their website, **MY DYING BRIDE** have a new album scheduled for August release. According to guitarist Andrew Craighan: "We have about 50 minutes worth of music now and are heading into full rehearsals to start sounding them out." Some working titles include: 'The Dance Of Lord Morte' and 'Rehearsals For Doomsday'... The progressive rock band **EQUINOX** recently parted ways with longtime drummer Eric Althaus. This came at the tail end of the mixing process of their forthcoming album, which had begun several months ago with Erik Norlander. Interested drummers should contact the band directly at band@vox-tempus.com. With this change, the band has chosen to change their name to **VOX TEMPUS**. In other news, the band have recorded 'Stone In Love' for an upcoming **JOURNEY** tribute album. Other bands on the tribute include **BALANCE OF POWER** and **TALISMAN**... **SINISTER** entered the studio on January 21 to record their album, *Savage Or Grace?* According to a posting on their website, "The new songs are extremely technical and fast in the same style as our debut *Cross The Styx*. You can expect this album out on May 12 through Nuclear Blast Records"... After announcing they were to call it quits in 2002, **CREMATORY** have announced that "Somehow, somewhere and sometime we will probably come back! After immense begging we recorded a cover of **METALLICA's** song 'One' for the *Tribute To The Four Horsemen* album. This was such great fun that after the recording session was over, we talked about an eventual comeback of Crematory. We have now begun writing new songs, and after we see how they turn out, we will decide if the comeback will really happen"... Metal Update (<http://www.metalupdate.com/>) revealed the winners of their Readers Poll 2002 recently: Album - **OPETH** - Deliverance, Band Website - **OPETH**, Label Website - Relapse, Magazine Website - Bravewords.com (THANXSI)... **HORIZON** is still looking for a lead singer. The guys are already in the studio working on the band's new album due for worldwide release on Massacre Records and they urgently need a voice. For more info head to www.horizon-site.net... **PIT BULL GRIN** have signed with CDN Records. Their debut full-length CD should be released in early 2003... The Japanese record label WorldChaos Productions is looking for European and North American black metal and melodic death metal bands for distribution and possible recording contracts. Bands on their roster thus far include **TERROR SQUAD**, **GRIMFORCE**, **ILLNATH**, **AGONY'S LAMENT** and Japanese thrashers **KING'S EVIL**. Contact WorldChaos at worldkdm@syd.odn.ne.jp or wcp@syd.odn.ne.jp for more information. Material can be sent to WorldChaos Productions, #406 New Light Bld., 2-25-6, Hongo Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, Japan 113-0033... Cogumelo Records

has released the new record from Brazilian thrash act **SIECRIST** called *What's Going On Your Mind...* **SUICIDAL TENDENCIES** recently announced that they had "studio time booked for January. By the end of the month we should have a good idea as to how we plan on proceeding, and what we hope to accomplish musically and individually in the coming year"... **MOB RULES'** *Hallowed Be Thy Name* album will be out in Japan on March 5th and is set to feature two bonus tracks... **SONATA ARCTICA's** forthcoming album will be called *Winterheart's Guild*. It's due out on February 22 in Japan and on March 17th in Finland. The first single is 'Victoria's Secret'. Appearing on four of the album's cuts is keyboardist Jens Johansson (**STRATOVARIUS**/ex-DIO). The band's permanent new keyboard player is Henrik Klingenberg (ex-**SILENT VOICES**, **REQUIEM**). The band have also scheduled a Japanese tour for April. Dates kick off on April 2nd at Zepp in Sendai and wrap up on April 10th at Club Quattro in Hiroshima... Nuclear Blast is releasing a **THIN LIZZY** Tribute called *Emerald - A Tribute To The Wild One*, in Germany. The tracks include: **SKYCLAD** - 'Emerald', **JOHN NORUM** - 'Wild One', **PRIMAL FEAR** - 'Out In The Fields', **ANTHRAX** - 'Cowboy Song', **SIX FEET UNDER** - 'Jailbreak', **SINNER** - 'The Sun Goes Down', **RUNNING WILD** - 'Genocide', **PRETTY MAIDS** - 'Baby Please Don't Go', **PEGAZUS** - 'Warriors', **GODGORY** - 'This Is The One', **MORDED** - 'Johnny The Fox', **GARDENIAN** - 'Got To Give It Up', **STEEL PROPHET** - 'Massacre' and **THERION** - 'Southbound'... Frontman Billy Milano and guitarist Paul Crook have finished recording all the basic tracks for the new **M.O.D.** record (called *The Rebel You Love To Hate*). The record was recorded at Wayne Manor studio (with Crook and Scott Metaxas producing) and will be mixed at Water Music in Hoboken, NJ. Crook commented: "Everything sounds huge and the songs are great." Watch for the record in April through Nuclear Blast... The reunited original **NUCLEAR ASSAULT** line-up, vocalist/guitarist John Connelly, bassist Danny Lilker, guitarist Anthony Bramante and drummer Glenn Evans, are preparing to tour in support of their *Alive Again* album, forthcoming from Screaming Ferret Wreckords. Confirmed dates will take the band through the US during the winter (with openers **ORIGIN** and **ALL THAT REMAINS**) and in Europe through the Spring on the No Mercy/Easter Festivals 2003 package tour with **TESTAMENT**, **DEATH ANGEL**, **MARDUK** and **PRO-PAIN**. Nuclear Assault are also planning a new studio record for the near future! Lilker offers a sneak preview of what can be expected: "We are in the process of writing new material, and I can tell you that it's definitely in the style of the old stuff"... Former **AGENT STEEL** vocalist Cyriis' new band, **STELLAR SEED**, will soon release their first full-length album entitled *Trilogy Of The Stellar Cult* (Vehicle 1) - Xerperion Particle Storm. Clips from three of the tracks are currently available at the band's official website, <http://stellarseed.com>... **TYPE O NEGATIVE's** forthcoming CD will be called *The Dream Is Dead* and is currently being recorded at Brooklyn's Systems Two Studios... **THOR** will star in and write and record music for an upcoming movie, *Graveyard*. Ed Brissos will be directing the picture which features Thor as the boss of a haunted hotel. The first single from the film, 'Walking In A Graveyard', was written by Thor and Johnny Hatch and will be recorded in L.A. with a video for the track to be shot in Vancouver. Meanwhile, Thor's *Triumph* album will be out soon in the US via Crash Records. Thor will also be releasing three albums on vinyl through Outlaw Recordings. The first will be a full-length picture disc of previously lost or unreleased material. It will include artwork by Mike Hoffman... **WITHERING SURFACE** keyboardist Morten Lybecker has left the band due to family priorities... According to an official statement from Century Media, **LACUNA COIL** were unable to participate on the 4 Absent Friends tour with **OPETH**, **PARADISE LOST**, and **TAPPING THE VEIN** due to the untimely processing of their immigration paperwork, which has affected many touring bands from abroad since September 11th, 2001. The band are making every effort to return to North America as soon as possible to promote their new album *Comales*, and are actively seeking another touring option for early spring/early summer... **EDEN-BRIDGE** have released their new album, *Apheleon*. The album was recorded in Karlsdorf, Germany's House Of Audio studios with producer Dennis Ward (**PINK CREAM 69**, **ANGRA**). The disc will be available in three formats: 1) a limited CD with 3D hologram cover and the bonus track 'The Whispering Gallery'; 2) a limited double-vinyl LP also with bonus track; and 3) as a regular CD. The album cut 'Red Ball In Blue Sky' features guest vocalist D.C. Cooper (**SILENT FORCE**, ex-**ROYAL HUNT**)... Finland's **ALTARIA** have finished recording the backing and harmony vocals for their forthcoming debut album,

Invitation. The backing vocals and choirs included about ten different singers, including Jouni, Marco Hietala (**NIGHTWISH**), **TAROT**, **CONQUEST**), Luis Herrero (**CRAYDAWN**) and Carsten "Lizard" Schulz (**DOMAIN**). The band, which features **SONATA ARCTICA** guitarist Jani Liimatainen plan to release the album through Metal Heaven in March... **PRIMAL FEAR** will play what they call a "very special show" at The Matrix in Bochum Germany on April 17th. A posting at their website reveals that at the gig they'll perform "a very special song list, including some Primal Fear classics, some very rare Primal Fear tracks and some special cover tunes"... Guitarist Marty Friedman is confirmed as an official member of **TOURNIQUET**. The band's forthcoming album, *Where Moth And Rust Destroy*, will be out on March 25th through Metal Blade Records... **DESTRUCTION** frontman Schmier says that the band will hit the studio "around March/April 2003. The release date should be September 2003. We will produce ourselves this time. No more compromises! Peter Tagtgren did a great job on *The Antichrist*, but we have to move on, look for a new challenge! I love Peter and we surely will work together again one day. About the DVD, he says "It should be ready at the end of next year. We wanna take our time with that. We already have a lot of bits and pieces from all over the world." The band will play Japan for the first time on May 27th and 28th at the Shibuya Club Quattro in Tokyo. King Records will release the *Alive Devastation* disc in April or May in that country. The album will be out in the rest of the world later in 2003... **ROB ROCK**'s new solo album is called *Until The Bitter End* and features appearances by Tobias Sammet (**EDGUY**, **AVANTASIA**), Mat Sinner (**PRIMAL FEAR**, **SINNER**), Richard Christy (**ICED EARTH**) and Wade Black (ex-**CRIMSON GLORY**). Says Rob: "The new songs are faster, heavier and little more European sounding to me. We have one song over ten minutes long and it will be our epic tune for the album. The album is a bit more focused this time and I'm confident it will be a worthy follow-up to *Rage Of Creation*"... **SUSPERIA** have decided to end their relationship with Nuclear Blast. The band are currently in heavy negotiations with several record labels all over the world. A new deal will be announced soon. Susperia have finished writing their next album, tentatively titled *Unlimited*, and will begin recording this spring... **MADDER MORTEM** are now confirmed to tour Europe in support of **OPETH** in February and March. The tour runs from February 2nd at La Locomotive in Paris, France through March 19th at Whelan's in Dublin, Ireland. The band's *Deadlands* album is out in the US now via The End. For more info go to: www.maddermortem.com... **MISERY INDEX** have written nine new tracks which they were scheduled to put to tape at the end of January at a friend's studio. Actual recording will begin this spring. Says the band: "We worked things out with J-F Dagenais (**KATAKLYSM** guitarist/producer) so that we can go to Canada to record in the spring. We'll be in there from March 28th - April 18th. We think that spending three weeks with J-F on the recording and production should allow us to make a really great record"... **PAUL DI'ANNO** has scheduled UK shows in March... Dutch band **SILENT EDGE** have found a new drummer; Marco Kleinbink... **INFLECTION** singer Idris has left the band for personal reasons. They have replaced him with Bjorn Goosses (**NIGHT IN GALES**) who has played a few shows with the band already. Inflection are currently writing new songs for their second full-length which will be entitled *Earshot*. Expect an early 2003 release... **EVE-MASTER** have inked a three album deal with Low Frequency Records. The band are almost finished recording their second album, *Wither*; in famous Astia Studios in Finland with producer Anssi Kippo. Mastering will take place at famous Finnvox studios in late January 2003 by Mika Jussila. Drums on the album are played by **CHILDREN OF BODOM**'s Jaska Raatikainen. The album is scheduled for a spring 2003 release... **TREE OF THE SUN**, featuring **DEVIN TOWNSEND**, Dale Crover (**MELVINS**) and Scott Reeder (ex-**KYUSS**), will release their collaboration soon through Jason Newsted's Chophouse Records... Fans can now sign up for **AFTERSHOCK**'s mailing list at www.aftershock.com. The band will be sending regular updates regarding news, shows, merchandise & MP3's throughout 2003... **PROJECT: FAILING FLESH** are a new collaboration between **E-FORCE**/ex-**VOIVOD** frontman Eric Forrest (vocals), Tim Gutierrez (instruments) and Kevin

131 (instruments). The band will soon enter Virginia's Assembly Line Studios to complete final vocal tracks for their debut CD, *A Beautiful Sickness*, due out this month. The album includes a cover of **VENOM**'s 'Warhead'. Forrest says that "To all Voivod fans that liked my work on Negator and Phobos, you are definitely going to dig this. Our music is like a soundtrack for World War 3"... **ZONATA** are in search of a new singer and keyboardist since the sudden and unfortunate departures of Johanned and John Nyberg. Interested parties in the Boras, Sweden area are urged to contact the band at: niclas.ka@telia.com... **ANATA** will be in StudioMega in February recording their third full-length album. It will feature ten tracks and will be issued through Earache/Wicked World... The ProgPower USA site, www.progpowerusa.com/, now has video of **ANGRA** performing 'Acid Rain' at last year's ProgPower III in Atlanta... Steel Cage Records have issued the following statement regarding the release of **MYTHIC**'s Anthology CD: "Due to circumstances beyond our control, and threats of legal action against us, Steel Cage Records regretfully announces the cancellation of the release of the Mythic CD Anthology and its deletion from our catalog... The side project featuring **BLACK SABBATH** axe Tony Iommi and Phil Anselmo (**PANTERA**, **DOWN**, **SUPERJOINT RITUAL**) is still a go, according to Sabbath fan site www.black-sabbath.com... **FORTE**'s Greg Scott has revealed that the band are now working on their first album since splitting with Massacre Records. Bassist Rev. Jones (ex-**FORTE**, **MSG**, **BLACK SYMPHONY**) will join the band for the project, to be released through Infinite Records... **CIRCLE OF DEAD CHILDREN** have inked a deal with Displeased Records. Their upcoming full-length, *Human Harvest* (CD and LP), will be recorded shortly for a late April 2003 release... Germany's Rock Hard Magazine celebrates 20 years of mayhem with a festival in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on June 7th and 8th. Bands confirmed thus far include **BLIND GUARDIAN**, **CANDLEMASS**, **BOLT THROWER** and **THRESHOLD**, with eight to ten acts to be added. A ticket for the two days costs 55 Euros (approximately \$55 American) plus 3 Euros service charge. Go to www.rockhard.de for more information... The 2003 Inferno Festival takes place April 17th - 19th at the Rockefeller Music Hall with performances from among others, **IMMORTAL**, **CHILDREN OF BODOM**, **TAAKE** and **VADER**... **DAVID WAYNE**, formerly of **METAL CHURCH** and current **REVEREND** frontman, was involved in a three car pile up in Tacoma, Washington. Sources say Wayne was traveling West on 56th and I5 at about 1:30pm in his late model Chevrolet Caprice Classic when he was forced to stop quickly. Wayne suffered trauma in his neck and back and had to be rushed to a local hospital to treat his injuries. Wayne was treated and released but under doctor's orders will need therapy and medications to meet his rehabilitation's requirements... **BALANCE OF POWER** singer Lance King has split from the band (in related news, Lance and his mate have a new baby). The remaining members have hired an internationally known lead singer and an announcement will be made after legal details are ironed out. The band will also soon announce a new label deal for the US. Meanwhile, Balance Of Power have begun work on their next album, due out through Massacre in Europe and Avalon Marquee in Japan this spring. Heathen Machine is the disc's working title. Production is being handled by Lionel Hicks. In related news, King makes guest appearances on new albums from **MATTSSON** and **SHINING STAR** (with guitarist Fabio Rocha), plus a tribute to **ULI JON ROTH** (**SCORPIONS**). All are due out early next year through Nightmare Records. BOP's new site, www.balanceofpower.org, is now open with a new look... **INFERNAL MAJESTY**'s track 'Death Of Heaven' can be downloaded from the "News" section of the band's website, www.infernalmajesty.com... **SOLACE**, the band that **GODSPEED** morphed into, released their sophomore album, *I3*, on January 28th. The album features ten Solace originals, **PENTAGRAM** and **AGNOSTIC FRONT** covers, and a tune with Wino (**THE OBSESSED/SAINT VITUS**) on guest vocals. Solace is also looking for the right band to hit the road with. Labels and bands interested, contact Solace's label MeteorCity: info@meteorcity.com... **NECRONOMICON** are currently focusing on the follow-up to Pharaoh of Gods. Entitled *The Sacred Medicines*, the album will be

KATAKLYSM Part Ways With Drummer!

KATAKLYSM has parted ways with long-time drummer Max Duhamel immediately after their recent European tour. Max initially announced to the band that he would be retiring but accepted to do the upcoming North American tour in February/March with **HATE ETERNAL**, **DYING FETUS** and **INTO ETERNITY**. But, to the band's surprise, Max decided to pull out of that engagement, leaving the band stranded to find a drummer. They have since found a temporary drummer and are preparing him for the tour.

Frontman Maurizio Iacono comments: "Basically that we're pretty much in shock, especially after the European tour we've just done and the upper level Kataklysm has reached with the last record. We all knew that Max was starting to get tired of doing this shit but we didn't expect him to quit so suddenly. We've struggled to find a last minute replacement and we found someone who is willing to help us out and make this tour happen, which we are very grateful (although he will not join the band permanently). J-F Richard (**BLASTFAME**/EON **DISSONANCE**) is practicing intensively at the moment with guitarist J-F Dagenais and bassist Stephane Barbe in hopes of getting everything done in time for a 35 minute set."

In tour news, Kataklysm has confirmed a co-headlining position at the Partisan Festival, this summer in Germany. The band still plans to play a full Canadian tour in late spring, the BW&BK festival in Cleveland this June and the Wacken Open Air festival in August. A full European tour is also in the works for September and the band expects to enter the studio in November to record the follow-up to *Shadows & Dust*, with guitarist/producer J-F Dagenais. The official title of the next onslaught will be *Serenity In Fire*.

SAXON Judgement Announced!

The ongoing legal action between the original members of the band **SAXON** has finally resulted in a judgment regarding the trademark. Guitarist Graham Oliver and bassist Steve Dawson, now performing as **Oliver/Dawson Saxon**, have won the action brought against them by vocalist Biff Byford regarding the trademark to the name **Saxon**. The result of this case means that the trademark **Saxon** is still owned by Graham Oliver and Steve Dawson. However this does not mean that **Oliver/Dawson Saxon** will be changing their name back to **Saxon**. As Oliver and Dawson have maintained throughout the case, **Saxon** is the band made up of the original five members, and as such they are not attempting to confuse or mislead the fans into thinking that they are the same band. **Oliver/Dawson Saxon**'s new live DVD *Rock Has Landed* is out now through Angel Air Records in the UK.

In the meantime, **Saxon** frontman Biff Byford posted his side of the tale in an open letter at www.saxon747.com:

"As you may know or may not know Oliver Dawson tried to register the name **Saxon** in 1996; they were successful but they did not tell us, they kept it secret. We did not find out until over two years later and we immediately launched an appeal at the trademark registry. We said that they had registered the name to try and cause as much grief as possible and that they were ripping off the fans by passing themselves off as **Saxon** (us). They said they registered the name on behalf of all the original members and the registrar went for it!!! So, the situation at the moment is we should all own the name, which in our opinion is wrong. We have lodged an appeal at the high court to try and overturn this decision. We feel this sets a serious precedent in the music industry; you could have people popping up all over registering their name. Think of all the bands over the last 20 years, all the line-up changes, it would be a fucking nightmare so we think the registrar was wrong. We would like a high court judge to have a look at this case which is happening sometime in January (I said it would be long - it takes much longer to tell the truth than a pack of lies),

THE OSBOURNES Season One Out Soon On DVD!

On March 4th Miramax Home Entertainment will release the DVD *The Osbournes: The First Season* (Uncensored). Starring **OSZY OSBOURNE** and his family, wife Sharon, son Jack, daughter Kelly and Nanny Melinda Varga, the unrated set features: all ten episodes of the first season with commentary, never before seen, un-aired footage from six episodes, four never-before-seen episodes, commentary track, "Too Oz For TV" blooper reel, *Ozzy's Ten Commandments*, *Diary Of An Osbourne/Random Acts Of Ozzy*, never-before-seen interviews with the cast, *Ozzy translator* (decodes the Prince Of Darkness), conversation with the Osbournes including life on the road, family values, first season stories and the untold story of Michael the Security Guard. Set Top Materials include: name that dookie, edit a scene and Osbournes Bingo Game (use supplied cards or download new cards off the internet to play bingo). DVDROM features include: food nuisance and a guide to The Osbournes website links.

In other news, **Ozzy** and Sharon renewed their wedding vows during a New Year's Eve party at the Beverly Hills Hotel that featured the **VILLAGE PEOPLE** as musical guests! The Osbournes were married on July 4, 1982, but delayed their 20th anniversary celebration because of Sharon's battle with colon cancer.

METALLICA

The Search Is On!

METALLICA's official website, www.metallica.com, has reported in its "Jump In The Studio" section that the band have begun looking for a new bassist to replace the departed Jason Newsted (VOIVOD).

Lars Ulrich explains that they abandoned the original plan to wait until the new album was recorded to find a bassist because it's likely that there will only be a short gap between the time that the band finish the new album and when they head out on their next world tour. Says Lars: "We ain't gonna do a lot of touring without a proper bass player, and we kind of realized that if we were going to not start the bass player thing until the record was done, we might end up in a situation like we usually do where there's three weeks between the end of a record and the beginning of a tour, and then we might end up in a really stupid, pressure situation, trying to get some guy and we don't have a lot of time. And that's why we started auditioning bassists."

New bassists will be auditioned by invitation only (rumours so far include Mike Inez, Joey Vera, Twiggy Ramirez and Scott Reeder). Those invited will be well-known musicians with the necessary skills and experience.

"We don't want rent-a-bass-player, we don't want mercenaries, we want someone that we can be proud to say to the fans and the rest of the universe that this guy is in METALLICA; he's a brother, and he's part of the team," Lars said. "And also somebody who can give us some strength."

The band are currently working on a new studio album with longtime producer Bob Rock for a tentative June release through Elektra Records.

In tour news, Metallica's 2003 European tour continues to grow with the addition of more dates. The current confirmed dates are: June 6-8 - Rock Im Park - Nurnberg, GER, June 13 - Heineken Jammin' Festival - Imola, ITA, June 26 - Roskilde Festival - Roskilde, DEN, June 28 - Werchter Rock Festival - Werchter, BEL and August 21-24 - Reading Festival - Reading, UK. Additional dates will be announced as they are confirmed.

ARMORED SAINT

A Trip Through The Archives!

According to www.armoredsaint.com, ARMORED SAINT is currently on hiatus as singer John Bush is getting ready for the release of the new Anthrax record, 'We've Come For You All'. In the meantime, watch out for Saint's reissue of their home video, A Trip Thru Red Times which is being released as a DVD full of extra videos, an interview conducted this past September, an old school photo gallery, plus the added feature of a 5.1 surround mix. Also coming from The Saint is a two-CD reissue of their classic record Symbol Of Salvation, which will include an extra disc of demo tracks, an interview conducted by Metal Blade CEO Brian Slagel about the making of the record. The two disc set will come with limited edition digipak packaging. Look for this sometime in Spring. As well, The Saint is currently putting together a new DVD which will feature the years 1991 - 2002. Says the band, "More live videos, photos and debauchery from The Saint in late Summer 2003."

In other news, bassist Joey Vera is currently finishing up work on the new SEVEN WITCHES record which is titled Passage To The Other Side. Joey is engineering and co-producing with guitarist Jack Frost, and also plays bass on this one. The record is scheduled to come out in February 2003 on Noise/Sanctuary records.

Drummer Gonzo and guitarist Phil Sandoval have teamed up with Jack Emrick and Ray Burke to reform the cult band favorite LIFE AFTER DEATH. They have begun to write new material for what will be an upcoming new release. Gonzo is at the helm in recording, engineering and producing the demos that will make up the follow-up CD to their self-titled 1996 release, Life After Death which was released in all territories EXCEPT the USA, on the now defunct German label, Rising Sun.

Gonzo's MONSTER G project is still under development. He continues to write with a no pressure attitude, commenting, "It will come out when it is finished. I have no time constraints but I'm anxious to complete it."

Guitarist Jeff Duncan is currently looking for distribution for his band DC4's, most recent record as the record label Rising Sun has folded. Meanwhile the band is playing selected dates in the LA area.

recorded in the band's hometown region of the Saguenay, in northeastern Quebec and will be produced by guitarist/vocalist Rob "The Witch"... Guitarist Tim Donahue contacted BW&BK to let everyone know that he and singer James LaBrie (DREAM THEATER) have enlisted drummer Mike Mangini (MULLMUZZLER, ex-EXTREME) to provide the backbone for their upcoming MADMEN & SINNERS project. Recording will take place through February, with a tentative release date scheduled for July/August in Japan... In ANGEL WITCH news, the current line-up, Kevin Heybourne, Jon Torres, Lee Altus and Tom Huntey reformed in December 2002 for what Kevin calls "the most powerful line-up to date." The band are in the process of writing a new album... KUTHE leader/founder Kurt Kuthe will resurface this spring with a new band and album called INITIATION. The album will be released in Canada, the US and Europe through Echo Relations in April, with a three week tour of the Eastern US planned for May... MANEGARM have completed their new album, Dodsford, at Underground Studios. The title refers to the ancient burials of the Vikings. Cover art comes from Belgian artist Kris Verwimp... HELLION have inked a deal with Germany's Massacre Records. Their new album, Will Not Go Quietly, should be out as you read this... Karyn Crisis, who appeared alongside Chris Barnes on the last SIX FEET UNDER slab, is putting CRISIS back together... STRAPPING YOUNG LAD/ZIMMER'S HOLE guitarist Jed Simon has a third band called TENET and plans to release a CD in May. The band line-up includes SYL drum god Gene Hoglan and ex-GRIP INC. bassist Stuart Carruthers... Although nearly a year off, organizers of the X-Mass Fest 2003 European Tour have announced that NILE, MISERY INDEX, HYPOCRISY, VADER, DISBELIEF and DEW-SCENTED are all confirmed to take part in the tour. The dates will run from December 7th - 21st, 2003. Info on dates and venues will be made available as they are announced... VEHEMENCE are nearing the completion of a new demo for 2003, featuring songs that were recorded at the Conservatory in Tempe, AZ. The demo tracks include: 'Kill For God', 'Kill For God' (acoustic version), 'You Don't Have To Be Afraid Anymore', 'We Are All Dying' and 'Darkness Is Comfort'... NIGHTWISH bassist Marco Hietala (ex-SINERGY) is currently finishing the music and lyrics for the upcoming album from his old group, TAROT... HAMMERFALL are filming their hometown show in Goteborg, Sweden on February 20 for an upcoming DVD. At the show, the band will be presented with gold albums for sales in excess of 30,000 copies of their new album, Crimson Thunder, in Sweden... MONSTER MAGNET have finished work on a new demo that is currently being shopped around to different labels. According to a recent online posting, frontman "Dave Wyndorf is in L.A. working on the music to the Ice Cube movie we are in that is slated to come out next summer"... Columbia's SAPROFFAGO has signed with Brutalized Records. The band's debut full-length CD, Beastly Horrible Thoughts, will be out this spring... '80s NWOBHM band SOLDIER will be releasing an EP at the end of March. It will consist of two old tracks (including the long awaited 'Infanticide') and two new tracks, one of which is entitled 'I'm Taken In'. World Management have revealed on their website that KREATOR will return to North America this year for some live dates. Producer Andy Sneap has mixed the band's forthcoming live album, Live Kreation (Revised Glory), due out soon through SPV. The release will come with a 36 page booklet including pictures from Kreator's last tour, as well as artwork from Andreas Marshall... This year's Motala Metal Festival takes place on April 19th in Motala, Sweden. Acts scheduled to perform include: PARAGON, FINNTROLL, STORMWARRIOR, EVERGREY and VADER... CLUTCH will perform a string of dates on the US East Coast beginning on February 14th at L'Amour's in Brooklyn, NY and concluding on February 23rd at Agora in Cleveland, OH... UK label Rage Of Achilles have signed a deal with Finnish band ELENIUM. The band will record their debut for the label in July, aiming for a late 2003 release... Rapper ICE-T's BODY COUNT project will release a new album in 2003... Olympic Records reports that DIABOLIC have made a change in their line-up. Aantar Coates was asked to leave the band and has since formed a new project called UNHOLY GHOST featuring ex-Diabolic members Jerry Mortellaro and Paul Oulette along with PESSIMIST's Kelly McLaughlin. The current Diabolic line-up includes Brian Malone, Eric Hersemann and Robert Cardenas. They are currently auditioning new drummers. The band will release their fourth album this Fall through Olympic/Century Media... STRAPPING YOUNG LAD are featured on the Guitar World Presents... tour with DARK TRANQUILLITY, NILE, NAPALM DEATH and THE BERZERKER, taking place in January and February. As well, new dates have been added to the upcoming UK tour fea-

turing SYL, DEVIN TOWNSEND BAND and ZIMMERS HOLE. The tour begins on March 15th at Rio's in Bradford, England and runs through to April 6th when the tour wraps up at the New Backstage in Munchen, Germany... The first run of ANTHRAX' forthcoming album, We've Come For You All, will be released in Europe on February 24th in digipak format with two bonus tracks added... CIRCLE OF NERO are currently shopping for a label to release their forthcoming CD, Brutal Harvest. The work fuses together a broad palette of influences, including hardcore, prog, goth/industrial, and nu-metal. While not wholly abandoning the sullen, doom-laden vibe of CON's independent release, Massive Obliss, Brutal Harvest boasts a catchy, invigorated sound that's generating the interest of many industry folks. Check 'em out on this month's Knuckletracks CD sampler. Visit them at www.circleofnero.com... ENGORGE have amicably parted ways with longtime drummer Gian Davila. His replacement is Bret O'Connor (GARDEN OF SHADOWS)... DIMENSION ZER0 were scheduled to enter studio Phlat Planet in Gothenburg, Sweden on February 10th with Anders Friden as producer to record their new album, This Is Hell. A September/October release through Regain is expected. This is the band's first album with new guitarist Daniel Antonsson... On March 25, OVERKILL will release Kill Box 13, via Spitfire Records. The tracklisting for the new disc is: 'Devil By The Tail', 'Damned', 'No Lights', 'The One', 'Crystal Clear', 'The Sound Of Dying', 'Until I Die', 'Struck Down', 'Unholy' and 'I Rise'... Guitarist/founder Stefan Weinerhall, informed BW&BK that vocalist Mathias Blad has left FALCONER. The band commented: "Falconer wants to give live activity a serious try, taking all chances we can get. The schedule for Mathias' musicals didn't make that possible. The new vocalist, Kristoffer, is also in the band DESTINY. He possesses his own style, which gives the band a chance to evolve. Also new in the band are the former session musicians: Anders Johansson (guitar) and Peder Johansson (bass). They have played in Falconer for a year now, so why not take them in as real members? The new album is to be recorded in May, at Los Angered studio once again. It will be a concept album, but fear not dear fans, it will not be one of those weird, hard to listen to concept albums. The music remains as it was before, just with one lyrical story throughout the album. After the release of the new album Falconer will finally do a proper tour in Europe"... BLAZE's forthcoming live album will be called AS LIVE AS IT GETS, and will be released on March 24th. The album features 18 tracks from Blaze Bayley's current band as well as favourites from IRON MAIDEN and WOLFSBANE. The tracklisting: 'Speed Of Light', 'Two Worlds Collide', 'Steel', 'Kill & Destroy', 'End Dream', 'Stare At The Sun', 'Land Of The Blind', 'Silicon Messiah', 'Dazed & Confused', 'Virus', 'The Brave', 'Stranger To The Light', 'Born As A Stranger', 'Identity', 'Tenth Dimension', 'Sign Of The Cross', 'Future' and 'Ghost In The Machine'. On February 25th Blaze's back catalogue (Silicon Messiah and Tenth Dimension) will be released in Canada, the US and Mexico through SPV/Steamhammer/Navarre. No word yet as to whether a live DVD will follow. Towards the end of the year, most likely in September, the band will be putting out a new studio album, the writing for which is already under way. Meanwhile, the band have parted ways with drummer Jeff Singer. The band have begun auditioning replacements... When Dutch progressive metallers ELEGY make their North American debut, as part of the BW&BK 6-Pack Weekend, June 13-14, the band will be breaking in new drummer Bart Bisseling. Dirk Bruinenberg was forced to "retire" due to ongoing health problems... NEVERMORE's new website, <http://www.nevermore.tv/news.html>, reveals that the band will soon enter a Seattle studio to begin work on their new album with producer Kelly Gray (DOKKEN, QUEENSRYCHE). Tentatively titled Enemies Of Reality, tracks set to appear on the release include 'The Story Of Our End', 'Who Decides', 'The Song Of The Solemn One', 'Enemies Of Reality', 'Psychotic Intellectual Narcotic', 'Tomorrow Turned Into Yesterday' and 'Abomination'. The album is out through Century Media later this year... SOULFLY front man Max Cavalera recently told BW&BK about his plans for 2003: "They say something about Cro-Mags and Voivod," he says, referring to a rumoured North American package. "I hope so, I love both of those bands. I'm also writing some new stuff already for our fourth album. It's going to be the same and different at the same time - some of the stuff is more weird, some of the stuff is heavier. We'll see what happens". The band are in the middle of an extensive headlining European tour that runs through March 2003 hitting 20 countries... PANTERA guitarist Dimebag Darrell gave BW&BK the lowdown about NEW FOUND POWER, the new project in which he teams with Pantera drummer Vinnie Paul, JERRY CANTRELL bassist Shawn Matthews and DIESEL MACHINE/ex-HALFORD guitarist Pat Lachman, who'll serve as the group's vocalist. "Man, it's on the fucking way right

now," he says. "We're damn near done with the record. It's fuckin' pure brutal, dude. I've always gone for the fuckin' power and always will." He says he hopes for an April release through an as-yet-undetermined label. "We gotta work all this shit out," he admits. In related news, the soundtrack for the upcoming film Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle will tentatively feature a cover of **ELTON JOHN**'s 'Saturday Night's Alright (For Fighting)', recorded by Dimebag **KID ROCK** and Chad Kroeger from **NICKELBACK**... **LAMB OF GOD**'s new album, *As The Palaces Burn*, will be released on May 6th through Prosthetic Records. The tracklisting: 'Ruin', 'As The Palaces Burn', 'Purified', 'Eleventh Hour', 'Take You Away', 'Boot Scraper', 'In Defense Of Our Good Name', 'A Devil In God's Country', 'Blood Junkie' and 'Vigil'. Guests on the album include former **MEGADETH** guitarist Chris Poland, **TODAY IS THE DAY** frontman Steve Austin and **STRAPPING YOUNG LAD** frontman Devin Townsend. The band are finalizing plans for a full US/Canadian tour beginning mid-March... **ARCH ENEMY** begin recording their new album this month with producer Andy Sneap. Guitarist Michael Amott stated that "Andy will be heading to Sweden for the pre-production. This process involves a final analysis of the material and various preparations for the recording session - basically eliminating any weak points! We are rehearsing like mad now. What can I tell you about the new songs? Lots of **HEAVY** riffs and **COOL** parts, the melodies and hooks are the strongest we've come up with so far in our career I believe. And yes, there's some ultra-sick guitar shit going on too"... According to an official posting on his website, **KING DIAMOND** are about to commence the recording of their forthcoming album, *The Puppet Master*. The update read as follows: "King wrote nine songs this time and Andy (LaRocque - guitarist) contributed three songs. So most likely there will be 12 songs on the album. However there is a slight possibility a short instrumental song might make it on the album. That is not confirmed at the moment. This time there will be no typical intro but an intro song which will be around two minutes and is entitled 'The Sailor' which ends with the words 'Let The Show Begin'. The new songs sound very aggressive but still have a lot of theatrical elements in it. Expect a lot of double kicks... Crash Music has signed a four album deal with Pennsylvania's **SINGLE BULLET THEORY**. The band recorded their new album, *Route 666*, in Haverstraw, New York, with James Murphy (**DEATH, OBITUARY**) and Freddy Ordine producing. The album is out this Spring and the band will tour the US in support of the release... The working title for new album from **THE FORSAKEN** is *Traces Of The Past*. The band enter Studio Abyss in May... Soil's Tim King recently gave BW&BK this exclusive update. The band will begin recording their new album, entitled *ReDefine*, this month for J Records/BMG. Tim says the album is in the same Soil style and basically takes off where the band's *Scars* album left off. He calls the material "a bit more mature, but with the token Soil sound"... No song titles are available at this time... **ANDROMEDA**, the brainchild of young guitar virtuoso Johan Reinholdz (also of **NONEXIST**) follow up their 2001 debut, *Extensions Of The Wish*, with *II=I*. *II=I* is the first release to feature new vocalist David Fremberg, and also the first to feature Reinholdz on bass. The record drops On March 11th... **CRYPTOPSY** have begun the writing process for their next studio record, tentatively due late 2003. To tide fans over; they will release a live record, appropriately titled *None So Live*, this spring. Recorded at the Medley in Montreal last June, *None So Live*, is the first official release to feature new vocalist Martin Lecroix... **EXODUS** have split with frontman Steve "Zetro" Souza due to "the singer's lack of commitment to the band and his unwillingness to tour for more than a couple of weeks at a time." The band are currently looking for a new singer and plan to record a new album this spring for a late summer or early fall release. Those interested can send their demos to the following address: EXODUS, 10026 San Pablo, El Cerrito, CA 94530, USA... **TO/DIE/FOR**'s new album, *Jaded*, will feature the following tracks: 'Dying Embers', '(I Just) Died In Your Arms' (**CUTTING CREW** cover), 'Too Much Ain't Enough', 'The Unknown II', 'Jaded', 'Fall Strains', 'Forever', 'Acos De Dolor' and 'Silence Tells More'. The album is due out through Spinefarm on March 3rd... Sweden's **WOLVERINE** are currently recording their new album, *The Cold Light Of Monday*. The band are updating their studio diary on a daily basis at: [\[dose.com/clomstudiodiary.htm\]\(http://dose.com/clomstudiodiary.htm\)... A member of Nuclear Blast's German office was recently in the studio with **HELLOWEEN** during the recording of their new album. The source says the album will be finished this month \(due out in May\). The material is described as, "very fast and heavy, better than their last one"... **CATTLE DECAPITATION** will begin filming a music video for their track 'To Serve Man' in March. They will be filming the live segments at upcoming shows at Hollywood's Knitting Factory, Ocean Beach's Dream Street and San Diego's Soma... Japan's **DEFILED** have inked a deal with Season Of Mist to release their new album, *Divination*, on May 20th in the US... **KING'S X** have recorded about ten tracks so far for their next album, *Black Like Sunday*. They plan to have the basic tracks \(bass, drums and one guitar\) recorded. A release is expected through Metal Blade in April or May. Also, the band's *More Manic* tour continues through the rest of February and into March. Dates began February 6th in Virginia Beach, VA \(Hoopla's Bar & Grill\) and run to March 4th in Phoenix, AZ \(The Mason Jar\)... **RIGOR MORTIS**' new singer is Dave Woodard... Self-proclaimed metal gods **MANOWAR** recently gave their German fans the finger during an appearance on *Top Of The Pops*. The ballad 'I Believe', a b-side on the single for 'The Dawn Of Battle', became a runaway hit and earned the band a spot on the German version of the famed UK production. Joey DeMaio and Co. hit the stage in full regalia, then proceeded to perform in *PLAYBACK* mode. However the stunt is working as Nuclear Blast Germany recently earned its first gold record in Germany \(150,000 units\) with *Warriors Of The World...* **KROKUS**'s comeback album, *Rock The Block*, debuted on the Swiss album charts at #1. The album sees vocalist Marc Storace back in the band alongside original guitarist Fernando Von Arb, guitarist Dave Stettler; drummer Marcel Kopp and bassist Tony "TC" Castell. The band will be touring in April and May in Switzerland and Germany rounding off with a series of performances at open air festivals during the summer... Although he recently scooped the guitar gig for the upcoming **WHITESNAKE** tour, DIO axe Doug Aldrich posted on his official website that "after the tour, I look forward to collaborating with Ronnie and Jimmy \(Bain - bassist\) on new music for the next DIO release." Dio's *Evil Or Divine?*: *Live In Concert* DVD will be released on April 22nd. Read more Dio news on page 15... **VOIVOD** \(now with former **METALLICA** bassist Jason Newsted\) have confirmed that their forthcoming album \(due out on March 4th through Chophouse\) will feature the following tracks: 'Gasmask Revival', 'Facing Up', 'Blame Us', 'Real Again', 'Rebel Robot', 'The Multiverse', 'I Don't Wanna Wake Up', 'Les Cigares Volants', 'Divine Sun', 'Reactor', 'Invisible Planet', 'Strange And Ironic' and 'We Carry On'. In the meantime, Newsted challenged his former bandmates to a "head to head" show and claims that if it were to happen that Voivod would "kick Metallica's ass"... This year's New England Metal And Hardcore Festival takes place on May 16th/17th at the Palladium in Worcester, Massachusetts. Confirmed performers include **SHADOWS FALL**, **CRADLE OF FILTH**, **LOCKED IN A VACANCY** and **THE RED CHORD**. More acts will be announced soon... **WINTERS BANE** are currently writing for their next album, their first with new vocalist Alexander Koch and new drummer Jeff Currenton. Tracks set to appear on the release include, 'Catching The Sun', 'Seal The Light' and 'Dice With Death'... **DANZIG** are tentatively scheduled to release their first DVD this Spring. The disc will include videos from '92/'93 \(including the unreleased clips for 'Sistas' and 'Bodies'\) and outtakes from the 'How The Gods Kill' and 'Dirty Black Summer' videos... **SPEED KILL HATE** are a new old-school thrash project featuring **OVERKILL** members Dave Linsk \(guitar\), Derek Tailer \(guitar\) and Tim Mallare \(drums\), and vocalist Mario \(ex-**ANGER ON ANGER**\). The band now working on their debut album, due out later this year... **VOMITORY** will play at the Motala Metal Festival in Motala/Sweden on April 19th. Other acts performing include **VADER**, **TANKARD**, **STORMWARRIOR**, **FINNTROLL**, **PARAGON** and **AUTOPSY TORMENT**. Check out the festival's website at: \[www.tpl.se/misc/metalfest.htm\]\(http://www.tpl.se/misc/metalfest.htm\)... **SPIRITUAL BEGGARS** and **CLUTCH** will share the bill for a string of shows in the UK this April. The dates are: April 7 - JB's - Dudley, England, 8 - Garage - Glasgow, Scotland, 9 - Academy 3 - Manchester, England and 10 - Mean Fiddler - London, England. ☼](http://www.wolverine-over-</p>
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European Festival Update!

Inferno Festival 2003 - April 17th - 19th (Oslo, Norway)

Confirmed acts include: **IMMORTAL**, **NECROPHAGIA**, **THE KOVENANT**, **OPETH**, **CHILDREN OF BODOM**, **ENTOMBED**, **RED HARVEST**, **SOILWORK**, **VADER**, **CADAVER**, **1349**, **EXMORTEM**, **RAGNAROK**, **BELPHEGOR**, **TAAKE**, **SIRENIA**, **PERISHED**, **RUMEMAGICK**, **AUDIOPAIN**, **MADDER MORTEM**, **RAISE HELL**, **CARNAL FORGE**, **NCO**, **GRAND ALCHEMIST**, **LUMSK**, **DERIDE**, **KOLDBRANN**, **ALSVARTR** and **LOST AT LAST**.

Sweden Rock Festival - June 6-8 (outside of Karlshamn, Sweden)

Confirmed acts include: **WHITESNAKE**, **TWISTED SISTER**, **BLIND GUARDIAN**, **JETHRO TULL**, **Y&T**, **KROKUS**, **BUDDIE**, **KAMELOT**, **PEER GUNT**, **SONATA ARCTICA**, **MOTORHEAD**, **URIAH HEPP**, **QUEENSRYCHE**, **DARKANE**, **TANKARD**, **THE REGULATORS**, **SLOW TRAIN**, **AXENSTAR** and **DUMPER**. The festival's kick-off party/press conference took place November 30th at the Hard Rock Cafe in Stockholm. This is when the festival's headliner were announced (by the band themselves), as well as nine other bands that will perform at the festival. The party at the Hard Rock was covered by VH-1 UK and several Swedish TV/radio stations. Another 41 bands will be announced in early Spring. Updates and more information can be found at www.swe-denrock.com.

BLIND GUARDIAN Open Air Festival

June 13th/14th (Coburg/Bamberg, Germany)

Confirmed acts include: **BLIND GUARDIAN**, **SUBWAY TO SALLY**, **GRAVE DIGGER**, **IRON SAVIOR**, **BRAINSTORM**, **A.O.K.**, **WHITE SKULL**, **BLACKENED**, **RAGE**, **PRIMAL FEAR**, **SOILWORK**, **NAPALM DEATH**, **FREEDOM CALL**, **TANKARD**, **MAGO DE OZ**, **STORMHAMMER** and **GALADRIEL**.

Bang Your Head - June 27th/28th (Balingen, Germany)

Confirmed acts include: **TWISTED SISTER**, **DIO**, **SODOM**, **THIN LIZZY**, **Y&T**, **TNT**, **U.D.O.**, **ANNIHILATOR**, **OVERKILL**, **HYPOCRISY**, **HAMMERFALL**, **MAS-TERPLAN**, **DÖKKEN**, **BITCH**, **ROB ROCK**, **PINK CREAM 69**, **AXXIS**, **BRAINSTORM**, **AMON AMARTH**, **ANGEL WITCH**, **CANDLEMASS**, **DEMON**, **SACRED STEEL**, **DESTRUCTOR** and **MAJESTY**. Also, on April 12th, a special event called *Bang Your Head: Revisited* features **DORO**, **MAJESTY** and up to four other acts that are yet to be confirmed. The event will take place at Zollern-Alb-Halle in Albstadt, Germany on April 12th. Tickets are available at Ticket-Hotline (+49-74 57-9 13 93) now and will be available soon through www.bang-your-head.de/.

With Full Force - July 4-6 (Leibnitz near Leipzig, Germany)

Confirmed acts include: **SUICIDAL TENDENCIES**, **SIX FEET UNDER**, **DESTRUCTION**, **MESSIAH**, **RYKER'S**, **NAPALM DEATH**, **THINK ABOUT MUTION**, **PYOGENESIS**, **SUBWAY TO SALLY**, **DRITTE WAHL**, **25 TA LIFE**, **DIE HAPPY**, **DISHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**, **J.B.O.**, **TOTENMOND**, **KILL YOUR IDOLS**, **TROOPERS**, **MANOS**, **BRIGHTSIDE**, **POISON IDEA**, **THE HUNNS** (feat. Corey Parks, ex-NASHVILLE PUSSY), **SAMAEL**, **EXTREME NOISE TERROR**, **DISCIPLINE**, **MAMBO KURT** and **THE BOSSA BABES**, **MOONSPELL**, **CHARLEY'S WAR**, **COCKNEY REJECTS**, **DORO**, **SLAPSHOT**, **STARS 'N' STRIPES**, **THE BONES**, **BACKFIRE**, **FISHBONE**, **OVERKILL**, **SOUL BRAINS** and **DIE KASSIERER**.

Gods Of Metal - June 7th/8th (Milan, Italy)

Confirmed acts include: **MOTORHEAD**, **QUEENSRYCHE**, **CHILDREN OF BODOM**, **NILE**, **SAXON**, **CARPATHIAN FOREST**, **DESTRUCTION**, **U.D.O.**, **PAIN OF SALVATION**, **SHAMAN** and headliner **WHITESNAKE**.

Wacken - July 31st - August 2nd (Wacken, Germany)

Confirmed acts include: **SLAYER**, **CRADLE OF FILTH**, **DARK ANGEL**, **DIAMOND HEAD**, **SENTENCED**, **DEW CREEPY**, **THE CROWN**, **DISMEMBER**, **SINISTER**, **ANCIENT RITES**, **THYRFING**, **DIE APOKALYPTISCHEN REITER**, **EXTREME NOISE TERROR**, **GAMMA RAY**, **ICED EARTH**, **LORDI**, **MALEVOLENT CREATION**, **NILE**, **PRIMAL FEAR**, **RAGE**, **STRATOVARIUS**, **THE ALMIGHTY**, **PUNCHDRUNK**, **VADER**, **KATAKLYSM**, **EIDOLON**, **L O R D I**, **ASSASSIN**, **SENTENCED**, **SINNER**, **HEAVENSHALLBURN**, **RAUNCHY**. **RUNNING WILD** will headline the opening night party, *Night To Remember*. The venue for the Wacken Open Air Roadshow's April 20th date has changed location to Rockhouse in Salzburg, Germany. The tour, which runs from April 14th - 25th will feature performances from **ONKEL TOM ANGELRIPPER**, **AMON AMARTH**, **MOB RULES** and a special guest. Tickets are available through www.metaltix.de.

Party.San Open Air - August 7th - 9th (Bad Berka, Germany)

Confirmed acts include: **DIMENSION ZERO**, **VADER**, **BEHEMOTH**, **TENEBRE**, **MALEVOLENT CREATION**, **NAGLFAR**, **DESTROYER 666**, **POSTMORTEM**, **LORD BELIAL**, **BURIED GOD**, **DARK FORTRESS**, **RESSURECTED** and **FRAGMENTS OF UNBECOMMING**. For more info visit the festival's homepage at www.party-san.de.

Summer Breeze - August 21st-23rd (Abtsgmund, Germany)

Confirmed acts include: **SINNER**, **CHILDREN OF BODOM**, **PRIMAL FEAR**, **AMON AMARTH**, **CALLENISH CIRCLE**, **GRAVEWORM**, **DARKSEED** and **J.B.O.** Presale for tickets began December 10th at www.summer-breeze.de. The first 200 tickets will be a special "heavy metal ticket," actually made of real metal.

Life in Black

MARDUK Funeral March 2003!

MARDUK's forthcoming CD single, 'Hearse', originally scheduled for release in January has been postponed until a week before the release of their new album, *World Funeral*, which is going to be released in all of Europe on February 24th through Bloodbath Productions. You can click <http://www.marduk.nu/marduk/index.htm> to view the album cover. The details of the US release of the album have not been settled. The full tracklisting to *World Funeral* is as follows: 'With Satan And Victorious Weapons', 'Bleached Bones', 'Cloven Hoof', 'Hearse', 'To The Death's Head True', 'World Funeral', 'Castrum Doloris', 'Night Of The Long Knives', 'Bloodletting', 'Blessed Unholy' and 'Blackcrowned'.

Marduk's upcoming *World Funeral 2003* European tour kicks off on April 8th at the Astoria in London, England and wraps up on April 21st at 013 in Tilburg, Netherlands. More dates will be added soon. Following the Euro tour Marduk will play dates in Australia, Japan, Mexico and South America. The band still await news from the INS on when they will be able to play dates in the US. They expect to hear by the end of this month.

VINTERSORG It's All A "Blur"!

According to an update on the band's website, "The next VINTERSORG album (The Focusing Blur) is going to have the format of a concept/theme album, a story running through the album's entirety, and with a musical flow that includes small compositions between the "real" songs. The music takes off from Visions From The Spiral Generator and twists and turns through a vast genre spectra (as always with Vintersorg). From mellow prog to extreme metal, to ambient and folkly vibes, spiced with a lot of effective contrasts, changing directories but united under a solid musical kingdom."

The tracklisting for the album is as follows: 'Prologue Dialogue', 'The Essence', 'The Theses Seasons', 'Matrix Odyssey', 'Star Puzzled', 'A Sphere In A Sphere (To Infinity)', 'Blindsight Complexity', 'Artifacts Of Chaos', 'Dark Matter Mystery/Blackbody Spectrum', 'Curtains' and 'A Microscopical Macrocosm'.

BORKNAGAR Recording To Commence In 2003!

BORKNAGAR mastermind Oystein G. Brun gives the following update: "The recording of our next album will start soon. We estimate to use about four to six months to record the album, as we want to use the time needed to get the album as close to perfection as possible. The album will be recorded in the same recording facilities as last time (Fagerborg and Toproom Studios) with Birge Finstad behind the desk. Musically the album will be a continuation of Empiricism. Apart from that, we deem the right to keep the rest as a secret... he, he... As of yet, there is no title for the album, but some song titles are ready: 'Cyclus', 'The Inner Ocean Hypothesis', 'The Wonder', 'Quintessence', 'Future Reminiscence' and 'Relate (Dialogo)'."

In related news, after years of toiling over the idea, Brun and Vintersorg will finally do a side-project together. Entitled ION, the band will record an album in 2003.

DARKTHRONE Breeze Through New Record!

According to their website, DARKTHRONE completed BOTH the recording and mixing of their new album, *Hate Theme*, in 26 hours! The band commented: "I still have the feeling that this recording suits Darkthrone. People always have different opinions, but we'll never change to be an overproduced act. The material on this album is up to you to have an opinion about. But I get a dark enthusiasm when listening to it. Hopefully it WILL deliver. It delivered for us anyway." SATYRICON frontman Satyr co-produced and mixed the album.

IMMORTAL has been Grammy (Alarmsprisen) nominated for their last album *Sons Of Northern Darkness*. They are nominated in the Metal category with SATYRICON (Volcano), RED HARVEST (Cold Dark Matter), KHOLD (Phantom), ARCTURUS (The Sham Mirrors). This year, the Grammy Awards will be held in Tinsberg, 80km south of Oslo. The show will be broadcasted live on national TV2. This annual show each year is viewed by 1.5 million people. ANCIENT CEREMONY recently sent out the following release: "After an accident involving bass player and main songwriter Jones, Ancient Ceremony is forced to take a break. In early January work will intensify on their new album, *Holycaust - Angelus Mortis*. In February we will begin recordings with Markus Stock and in June the opus will be released through their label Trisol/Armageddon Shadow. Vocalist and frontman Chris will visit Russia in late January for certain promotional activities and from March on the band will again start haunting European clubs and festival stages... SUIDAKRA are looking to record their next album in April at Stage One Studio in Germany with producer Andy Classen... THY PRIMORDIAL are scheduled to enter Abyss studios with producer Tommy Tagtgren next summer to record their sixth album... THORNSPAWN has confirmed that their "next attack" will be called *Sanctified By Satan's Blood*. The band have written the following tracks for the record: 'Sanctified By Satan's Blood', 'Occult Black Death' and 'God Of Unholy Battalions'. The record, due out through Osmose in 2003, will be recorded at Morrisound Studios. In related news, Osmose has secured the rights to Thorns spawn's debut album, *Blood Of The Holy, Taint Thy Steel* and will reissue it with new cover art by underground artist Ereshkigal in a black digipak with the Empress From The Realms Of Blasphemy EP as bonus tracks... EINHERJER have posted three songs from The Eternally Damned demo. The tracks that can be found at www.einherjer.com are as follows: 'The Eternally Damned', 'Ware Her Venom' and 'Dead Knight's Rite'... The Violating Europe tour begins on February 20th and will feature SPAWN OF POSSESSION, DISAVOWED and VILE. MANGLED (first half) and INHUME (second half) will split the dates. The tour runs until March 16th... DIVINE RAPTURE is currently in mixdown mode for the album *The Burning Passion*. In related news, the band are also featured on the MORBID ANGEL tribute, *Tyrants From The Abyss*, performing 'World Of Shit'... Newly signed to Earache, DEICIDE's Glen Benton says that the band should be "in the studio around March, but we're touring to get some money up so we can live while we record. We've got more material than we know what to do with! Now we're doing records for us so it's back to the old thinking and the old ways of writing"... Toronto's ECLIPSE ETERNAL are in the studio with Glen Drover (EIDOLON, KING DIAMOND) who is engineering and co-producing the band's self-titled five song EP, due out in early 2003. The demo will include the songs 'Reign Of The Unholy Blackened Empire', 'Infested With The Human Disease', 'Storming The Pearly Gates', 'Awaken Ye Lords Of The Dark' and 'The Eternal King From Below Doth Arise'. The full-length release of the album *Reign Of The Unholy Blackened Empire* will be early Summer 2003. The band is still seeking a keyboardist for playing live performances and future musical compositions. Contact them at hellknowsmyname@hotmail.com or mp3.com (Eclipse Eternal)... MELECHESH's third album, *Sphynx*, will be out through Osmose soon. Produced at Andy LaRocque's Los Angered Studios in Gothenburg, Sweden, the album was mastered in Amsterdam, Holland's Bauwuis Studio by Attie Bauw (JUDAS PRIEST, RUSH, HALFORD)... Portugal's Sound Riot Records have released DEMON CHILD's new album, *Shadow Cult*. Clips from the disc's tracks can be heard at www.demonchild666.cb.net... In MORTIIS news, Earache's limited edition version of *The Smell Of Rain* album, featuring four new remixes, is available now... USURPER have completed the recording of *Twilight Dominion*, their debut album for Earache, at Chicago's Engine Music Studio with producer Neil Kernon. Says Usurper axeman Rick Scythe: "This album will kill all posers. This album is total Earache quality. TOTAL METAL LUST!!!" The album is set for release in April. Meanwhile, the band have posted a new track, 'Metal Lust' at www.mp3.com/usurper in the Music section... ROTTING CHRIST will be hitting the road in Europe soon with PRIMORDIAL and ENTHRONED... MORIFADE have start the recording of their new album at Los Angered

Recording, Gothenburg with Andy La Rocque; the mix will be done there as well and the vocals and choirs will be recorded in Monogram Recording, Stockholm... HELL-BORN have released their new album, *The Call Of Megiddo*, through Conquer Records... Century Media were set to issue a SAMAEAL 2DVD set on January 27th. The as-yet-untitled set will feature last Summer's Summer Breeze Open Air performance, a show from Poland shot on 1996's Passage Tour, videos for 'Jupiterian Vibe', 'Infra Galaxia' and 'Baphomet's Throne', and interviews and studio footage from the recording session for Passage. The band have also inked a deal with World Management (home of MORBID ANGEL, NILE, UNLEASHED). Samael are on the road with CATHE-DRAL and WITHOUT FACE until March 4th... DARK FUNERAL and MNW/No Fashion Records have announced that effective immediately they are no longer contractually bound to Necropolis Records. Dark Funeral will now begin writing and rehearsing new material with hopes of recording again in 2003. Any parties who are interested in negotiating for rights to license or distribute their latest album, *Diabolis Interium*, or are interested in working with the band on future recordings are encouraged to contact Lord Ahirman at lordahirman.df@hotmail.com or Emperor Magus Caligula at emc_df@hotmail.com... ELEVENKING have a new singer, Kleid, and a new keyboard/violinist, Elyghen. The band have finished writing for their next album and hope to enter the studio in January to begin recording... Canadian metallers WOODS OF YPRES' website address was listed incorrectly on the Knuckletracks CD enclosed in the latest issue of BW&BK. The band's correct website address is woods-fypres.ca. We apologize for any inconvenience... AGATHO-DAIMON bassist Marko T. recently decided to leave the band due to health problems. Guitarist Sathony comments: "He was undergoing stomach surgery many months ago, and since then he continuously lost his joy to play gigs due to the problems he had with longer travels, which didn't get better until now; so he decided to quit. It was a hard decision for him, and we wish Marko the best of luck"... GORGOROTH's Ghaal has finally been released from Norwegian prison. Vocals for the band's new album, *Twilight Of The Idols (In Conspiracy With Satan)*, should be finished as you read this. A mid 2003 release is expected through Nuclear Blast... AETERNUS has confirmed that HADES ALMIGHTY drummer Remi will guest on the track 'The Trident' on the band's upcoming album, *A Darker Monument*, due out early this year... ZYKLON have nearly finished work for their next album, due out next Summer. The new album will be the first to feature bassist/vocalist Secthdamon, who replaces Daemon... SATHANAS have inked a deal with Drakkar Productions. The band's new album, *Hex Nefarious*, will be released in 2003. A possible tour with MURDER RAPE is in the works. For more info go to: drakkar2@wanadoo.fr. Meanwhile, the band's *Warlords Of Death 7" EP* is out now and features a cover of BATHORY's 'Raise The Dead'... LORD BELIAL guitarist Fredrik Wester has left the band feeling he needs more time to himself. The rest of the band wish him well. The band lineup is back to how it was in the beginning: Thomas (vocals/guitar), Micke (drums), Anders (bass) and Niclas Pepa Andersson (guitar)... NEPHASHTH are about to enter the studio to record their follow-up to *Immortal Unholy Triumph*. The title of the next album is *Conceived By Inhuman Blood*. A May 25th release is expected, to be followed by a European tour... THALARION will release their new, third CD, *Tunes Of Despondency*, in December... SIEBENBURGEN vocalist Turid Walderhaug is no longer in the band, according to the band's website, www.siebenburgen.net. In the meantime, the band will use singer Erika for their upcoming shows. THY INFERNAL are working on new material for their forthcoming album, due out next Spring. For more go to: www.blackorchard.com/thyinfernal... Norway's MANES have finished recording their new album, *Vilosophe*, at Skansen Lyd studio in Trondheim. The "work in progress" demo track, 'Redeemer' can be found on the upcoming Code666 compilation *Better Undead Than Alive...* DIABOLICUM will enter Greencastle studio in June 2003 to record their new album, *Vengeance...* BLOOD RITUAL are finishing up their second album, due out next Spring. They have also written the larger part of their third album, which will follow shortly after the second. The new album features cover art by Magister Rex



ENSLAVED

"References To The Early Days!"

ENSLAVED's have announced that their forthcoming album, *Below The Lights*, will be out through Osmose on March 3rd. The record will be mixed and finished in mid-January. According to a recent press release by guitarist/keyboardist Ivar B: "The album speaks for itself, but again we are proud to say we have gone further down the road of exploration. And on the other hand it is darker and contains more references to the early days of Enslaved in the sense of more ambience and structure to the songs. The progressive and experimental elements are still there, more refined and subtle than ever. You will also find pieces of traditional Northern music, this time more incorporated in the Enslaved core material. Melodic elements and complex harmonics are also a prominent feature."

"After returning from the UK in March last year, we all realized that R. Kronheim's (lead/rhythm guitar) days in the band had come to an end. Extremely unhealthy and unsociable habits combined with strong personalities and different musical tastes on both sides made it impossible to continue. That didn't stop us, and with the added force of lead guitarist A. Isdal, we went on to make *Below The Lights*. The quality of the arrangements and the level of musicianship should prove that the core of Enslaved more than survived the changes."

"The cover art is once again under the brush of Truls Espedahl (who also made the artwork for *Monumentation*). This time the artwork will follow the music and lyrics even closer, and a surreal, dark and magnificent piece of art will meet you in the shops March 3rd."

"After the finishing of the album, Dirge Rep (drums) decided to leave the band. The reason is quite simple; he is burned. No point in arguing with that. Goodbye and thank for the drum work, brother-in-arms! We have a replacement for live and studio sessions in Freddy B., the drummer some of you might remember from the UK tour in March 2002 when Dirge sat at home with a broken foot!"

The tracklisting for *Below The Lights* is as follows: 'The Crossing', 'Havenless', 'A Darker Place', 'Queen Of Night', 'A Dead Stare', 'As Fire Swept Clean the Earth' and 'Ridicule Swarm'. ☸

Church. A limited edition will be available with exclusive packaging... **WINDHAM HELL** are working on their fourth album and finishing up material for the Complete Awareness/Inverted Trance limited CD release. Meanwhile, a reissue of their *Window Of Souls* album is in the works. It will include one bonus track and a completely redone hidden track. For more on the band go to: www.virtual-cafe.com... **DRAWN & QUARTERED** have finished writing for their second album and will enter Black Lake studio in December to record. The new material is said to be "much darker than anything they've written before, while keeping their trademark technical and brutal approach." The band also have a new drummer, Mr. Derna (**EVOKEN, ABAGORATH, INFESTER**)... **JUDAS ISCARIOT** have released their sixth full-length album, *To Embrace The Corpses Bleeding*, through Red Stream. Coming soon from the band are a split LP with **ABYSSIC HATE** and a new MCD entitled *Moonlight Butchery*... **WIND OF THE BLACK MOUNTAINS** have released their new album, *Black Sun Shall Rise*. The band are now in the studio recording a new MCD for The Cult Records and their third album, *Feasting Upon Christ*, for Barbarian Wrath... Finland's **SARGEIST** are currently finishing the recording for their debut CD, *Satanic Black Devotion*, scheduled for an early 2003 release. They have also contributed an unreleased track for a split 7" EP with **MERRIMACK**, out now and limited to 1,000 hand-numbered copies... **GENOCIDE KOMMANDO**'s debut album, *Black Metal Supremacy*, has just been released. A follow-up is already in development for a winter release. It was recorded, engineered and mastered by James Murphy (ex-**DEATH, TESTAMENT**)... The Cult Records have inked a deal with Drakkar Productions to release **GRAND BELIAL'S KEY**'s Judeobast Assassination album in the US... **AZRAEL** have inked a deal with The Cult. The band's full-length debut is due out late this month or in March... Romania's **NEGURA BUNGET** have finished recording their third album, *N'Crangul Brabului*, at Bucharest's Magic Sound Studio. The album is due out through Code666 on January 27th. It will come in a special, never-seen-before hand made CD box with a state-of-the-art multimedia track. Check out the band's new website at: www.negurabunget.com... **KULT OV AZAZEL** are in the studio recording their new album, *Oculus Infernum*, for a planned February release date through Arctic Music... **SOULREAPER**, the band that features members of **DISSECTION**, have finished recording their second album, *Life Eraser*. Guitarist Stefan Karlsson comments on the album, out soon through Hammerheart: "The fast parts are faster, the heavy parts more heavy and the brutal parts are crushing everything that has been done. A killer album for sure"... **INFERNAL SUMMON** are back with a new five track MCD, *Summon Forth The Beast*, that includes two new tracks and three covers of tracks from **MORBID ANGEL**, **VON** and **BATHORY**. The MCD is an appetizer for the group's next full-length release, due out through Hammerheart early in the year... **SEPTIC FLESH** will release their next album through Hammerheart early this year. Entitled *Sumerian Daemons*, tracks on the release will include 'Unbeliever', 'Red Code Cult', 'Dark River', 'Faust' and 'Mechanical Babylon'. The album was recorded in Studio Fredman with producer Fredrik Nordstrom (**ARCH ENEMY, IN FLAMES**)... **BLOOD**

RED THRONE's new album, *Affiliated With The Suffering*, will first be released through Hammerheart in a limited edition digipak featuring two exclusive bonus tracks, 'Mercy Killings' and 'Deadly Intentions' (**OBITUARY** cover). The vinyl version (strictly limited to 500 copies) contains the **MASSACRE** cover 'Cryptic Realms'... **OLD MAN'S CHILD**'s new album, *In Defiance Of Existence*, is due out in early 2003 and features frontman Galder, Jarar on lead guitar and drummer Nicholas Barker (**DIMMU BORGIR/LOCK UP**). Making a guest appearance on several tracks is guitarist Gus G. (**DREAM EVIL**). The album was produced at Studio Fredman and engineered by Fredrik Nordstrom. The CD will be released on vinyl in Europe through Century Media... **EPHEL DUATH**'s new album, *The Painter's Palette*, should be out now, containing an MPEG video of the track 'The Embossed' (taken from the *Rephormula* album), as well as a video report of the Making Of The Painters Palette... **LUNARIS** are presently writing new material for a new album that is tentatively scheduled for a late spring recording. Producers and studios are being considered for this as yet untitled opus... **DIMMU BORGIR** are currently working on the follow-up to *Puritanical Euphoric Misanthropy* and expect the recording to be complete in May with a tentative release date being September through Nuclear Blast. Guitarist Silenoz says that the band will most likely skip playing any festivals this summer. A US tour in the fall is currently being considered... According to a posting on their website, **ETERNAL TEARS OF SORROW** "have decided to split up"... **ENTHRAL** will release their debut album for Displeased in June. The album is currently being recorded. Vocalist Martin Walkyier (**SABBAT, SKYCLAD**) guests on the release... **RAVAGER**'s new album will be called *Naxxgul Rising* and recording sessions should be underway as you read this... **ARKHON INFAUSTUS** will tour with **VADER** in Europe at the end of April... **MORBID ANGEL** are currently writing tracks for their next album. The band hope to release the new set in September through Earache and follow it up with a World tour. The band are expected to announce the names of their new bassist/vocalist and second guitarist shortly... **FINNTROLL** began recording an acoustic EP on February 11th. Details are yet to be announced but rumours are flying that the EP will feature the band's original vocalist Katla... Former **MORBID ANGEL** Axe Debuts **PATHS OF POSSESSION!** Ex-Morbid Angel guitar player Richard Brunelle will finally unleash his latest band, *PATHS OF POSSESSION* with their debut release, *Legacy In Ashes*, to be released in February through Still Dead Productions. Sources say that it will not be in the Morbid Angel vein but will tread the more melodic death metal path. Also, Still Dead will be releasing the long-awaited comeback release from Florida's **BRUTALITY**. Still contemplating the title *As Darkness Falls*, the band now features original Brutality guitarist Larry Sapp as well as Scott Reigel on vocals, Jeff Acres on bass, Demian Hefel on guitar and drummer Jim Coker. In a Brutality crossover, Florida's **CONTORTED**, features ex-Brutality members Ed Webb and Pete Sykes, along with drummer Jim Coker, and will enter the studio in February to record their debut CD for Still Dead Productions. It will be brutal Florida style death metal in the traditional vein. ☸

GOD DETHRONED

Finish New Record!

GOD DETHRONED have finished recording for their upcoming album, *Into The Lungs Of Hell*, at Sweden's Berno studios. The album, out now, was produced and mixed by Henrik Larsson (**AMON AMARTH**), and features eight songs with a total running time of 38 minutes. The CD booklet will contain the songs' lyrics.

Frontman Henri Sattler comments: "Sometimes it was just necessary, because for example the song 'Slaughtering The Faithful' is dealing with the bio-industry and the way we treat animals. It was pretty shocking to read my own lyrics again just after I wrote it. We decided to explain some things here and there to avoid misunderstandings because people would think we were singing about concentration camps and shit like that."

Into The Lungs Of Hell will have the following tracklisting: 'Into The Lungs Of Hell', 'The Warcult', 'Enemy Of The State', 'Soulsweeper', 'Slaughtering The Faithful', 'Subliminal', 'The Tombstone' and 'Gods Of Terror'.

The first edition of the album will be released as a double CD and 2LP set. The package will include a fat booklet and, besides the regular album, a bonus CD. The tracklisting for the bonus disc: 'God Dethroned' (re-recorded version), 'Satan's Curse' (**POSSESSED** cover), 'The Execution Protocol' (live), 'The Grand Grimoire' (live), 'Nocturnal' (live), 'Under a Silver Moon' (live), 'The Sombreness Of Winter' (live), 'Serpent King' (live), 'Villa Vampiria' (video clip) and 'Under The Golden Wings Of Death' (video clip). The live tracks were recorded at the Whiskey A GoGo in Los Angeles in February 2000 on the Death Metal Massacre Tour with **CANNIBAL CORPSE**, **HATE ETERNAL** and **DIABOLIC**.

SATYRICON

Tops In Norway!

SATYRICON's latest album, *Volcano*, was voted Norwegian album of the year by two of the country's biggest dailies: *VG* and *Aftenposten*. A third daily, *Dagbladet*, voted the record #5 for the year. In tour news, the band's *Black Lava Down Europe 2003 Tour* will run from February 14th at Zeche Carl in Essen, Denmark to March 23rd at Markthalle in Hamburg, Germany. **KHOLD** will open all shows.

Also, the 'Fuel For Hatred' video can now be seen at www.satyricon.no. Broadband connection is highly recommended for viewing as it isn't possible to get a proper impression without it. The director of the clip explains that while a four minute video has an average of 280 clips, this video has over 500. A posting from the band on their website reads: "As every TV station keeps banning it; showing it streaming online is currently our only option."

In other news, the vinyl version of *Volcano* will be released via frontman Satyr's own label, Moonfog, in February.

GOATWHORE

Net Assault!

GOATWHORE's website, www.goatwhore.net, is now up and running. The band have also added a second guitarist, Tim Holsinger, to their line-up. The band's next album is currently being mastered and is due out this month. A tour will follow the release. In related news, Rotten Records has released a vinyl gatefold version of Goatwhore's *The Eclipse Of Ages Into Black* album. It is a limited release of 1000 copies (500 copies of the vinyl being black and 500 copies of them being clear red). To order go to www.goatwhore.net or www.rottenrecords.com for further details. Also, Goatwhore has recorded the **CELTIC FROST** cover 'Into Crypts Of Rays' for a split 7" with **EPOCH OF UNLIGHT**, who have covered **KREATOR**'s 'Betrayal'. It will be released through Bloatd Goat Records (www.bloatedgoatrecords.com) in early 2003. Go to the Bloatd Goat Records website for a sample of both tracks and updates on the release date.



IN A HARD PLACE

TWISTED SISTER "Reunited, Not Reformed!"

Rock Confidential (www.rockconfidential.com) recently spoke with TWISTED SISTER's Dee Snider regarding the reformed bands upcoming plans.

Says Dee: "Well, first of all as far as I'm concerned we have not reformed. We have reunited. A reformation implies the band getting back together, picking up where you left off and restarting your careers. Reuniting is a short term thing where you have a specific purpose. In this case for me, and I can't speak for everybody, I hated the way the band went out. It came on ferociously and ended with a thud. If I was to write it down I would write, "Twisted Sister" with an ampersand (&) with "..." after it. I felt that a band like this should have exclamation points at the end of it. To me this is the opportunity to put that exclamation point at the end of our name and say "goodbye" properly."

"It's nostalgia," he added. "I'm not trying to restart my career. All my peers are releasing new albums and they're not selling. For me, it's too much work and too much heartache."

QUIET RIOT DVD On The Way!

QUIET RIOT drummer Frankie Banali contacted BW&BK recently with the following update.

"The DVD, Quiet Riot Live In The 21st Century - 20 Years Of Metal Health, is scheduled for release in mid-March 2003. We filmed it at the Key Club in Hollywood, California. The club was the old, famed Gazzari's where VAN HALEN often played in the early days, but Quiet Riot had never performed there in the past. Technically I suppose you could say we played three shows in one day. The evening before we played in Santa Ana, CA but went on after midnight. We played the entire set the next afternoon at the Key Club to have safety footage in case there would be technical problems during the actual evening shoot. Then of course, the actual show."

When I proposed making this live DVD to Quiet Riot, I wanted to make sure that it was a real live show without overdubs in a studio. That was the reason for the day shoot. The entire show is a live representation of Quiet Riot. With the release of the DVD early this year, we will concentrate on touring to promote it. I hope to have Quiet Riot in the studio late in 2003 to record and release new studio material in early to mid 2004. We are already writing new material and deciding what we want to musically do on the next CD."

STEPHEN PEARCY "My Life Story!"

STEPHEN PEARCY has commenced work on RaTales, a book which details the rise and eventual fall of RATT. He told Rock Confidential: "This is rock 'n' roll. You don't have to be truthful in rock 'n' roll, but the truth will come out. Not in a vicious way, but I've decided to let people know what's going on. RATT was a great band... probably could be. I want to let people know about the good times and how it started... who was involved and that type of thing. It's my life story. This is what happens when you really want something to happen. Sometimes it doesn't happen the way you like. Some of the best bands in the world are no more. Why? You do need to sometimes take steps back to go forward if you haven't been moving ahead constantly. Bands like BON JOVI who are stable know what's going on. There's no constant turmoil and disrespect. There were a lot of great, crazy, fucked-up times and there were a lot of really screwed-up things. 'RaTales' is gonna come out and tell people exactly how it is and how it was. I hope to have it out sometime later in the year."

DEEP PURPLE are working on a new album with KID ROCK producer Michael Bradford. Currently in the writing stage, the album is due out on August 1st. The line-up includes Ian Gillan (vocals), Roger Glover (bass), Ian Paice (drums), Steve Morse (guitar) and Don Airey (keyboards). In tour news, Purple and LYNRYD SKYNYRD will be playing a set of shows throughout the UK this summer. They have confirmed three shows for: London's Wembley Arena on June 21, Dublin's Point on June 24th and Glasgow's SECC on June 25th... Guitarist Paul Crook (SEBASTIAN BACH, ANTHRAX, GLENN HUGHES) has joined the MEAT LOAF band. Paul begins rehearsing with Meat Loaf this month, learning songs from the upcoming album Couldn't Have Said It Better; for appearances on TV, radio and at private media events. An extensive world tour in support of the release is also being planned. Says Paul: "I am honored to play my guitar for Meat! He is a wonderful human being/musician/entertainer. Musically, his songs are brilliant and the guitar parts are dynamic"... Action star Arnold Schwarzenegger will have a song from the long time coming GUNS N' ROSES Chinese Democracy album: included on the soundtrack for Terminator 3. Schwarzenegger has been a supporter of Axl Rose for some time. On T2 he used GN'R's 'You Could Be Mine'. Then in '99, when it looked like the release of Chinese Democracy was imminent, he used 'Oh My God' for his movie End Of Days. Terminator 3: The Rise Of The Machines will be released on July 2nd... GLENN HUGHES is currently working on his new record, Songs In The Key Of Rock, due out through Pony Canyon in May and Frontiers in June. About the recording he says it "was written with a '70s vintage frame of mind. I surrounded myself with '70s stuff: '70s clothes, '70s everything, and I found myself back in 1973. The sounds you will be hearing and the songs are trippy and hard and greased up rock. You can serve this one up nice and hot on the summer barbecue"... STYX are currently putting the finishing touches on their new studio album, Cyclorama, the first to feature the line-up of James "JY" Young, Tommy Shaw, Todd Sucherman, Glen Burtnik and Lawrence Gowan. Chuck Panozzo also appears on the album. The album is on due out February 18th... MENIKETTI plan to record a live disc on their upcoming tour of Japan, taking place at the end of January. The shows in Osaka and Kawasaki will be recorded for a live album. Said frontman Dave Meniketti at his website: "Should be a good one and hopefully it will really get the emotion and energy across in a raw and 'real' way. It will only be a Japanese release, but I'm sure it will be available elsewhere." The band (Dave Meniketti, Myron Dove, Chris Miller, Tommy Grasso) is gearing up for a number of live shows in Spain in February... GEORGE LYNCH is working on a DOKKEN/LYNCH MOB covers CD which will have the following tracklist: 'Tooth And Nail', 'Tangled In The Web', 'All I Want', 'Kiss Of Death', 'Cold Is The Heart', 'River Of Love', 'Wicked Sensation', 'She's Evil But She's Mine', 'When Darkness Calls', 'The Secret', 'Breaking The Chains' and 'Paris Is Burning'. The ex-Dokken axe is also putting together a Lynch Mob bootleg DVD... Target stores in the US are selling an exclusive/limited BON JOVI CD featuring eight tracks. The first five tracks are demos from Bounce that haven't been released in the US ('Breathe', 'Lucky', 'No Regrets', 'Standing' and 'We Can Dance'). The other three tracks are live versions of 'Misunderstood' and 'Just Older' recorded in New York City this past August, and an acoustic version of 'Everyday'. In tour news, the next batch of Bon Jovi tour dates begin March 14 at Office Depot Center in Fort Lauderdale, FL and run to mid-April. Bon Jovi also recorded a full acoustic live set at the Yokohama Arena in Japan on January 19th. Rumor has it the gig is being filmed for a live DVD... In April, Versailles Records is releasing Best Of Both Worlds: A Tribute To Van Halen's David Lee Roth and Sammy Hagar, featuring current and former members of bands including AEROSMITH, DOKKEN, DANGEROUS TOYS, TNT, XYZ, ENUFF Z'NUFF, WATCHTOWER, ROUGH CUTT, QUIET RIOT and KIX... A new series of spoken word/book-on-CD releases entitled the Audiobiography Series begins soon. The first is An Education In Rebellion: The Audio-Biography Of Motley Crue's Nikki Sixx, due in stores in April. In related news, Black Market Publishing has finally released An Education In Rebellion: The Biography Of

Nikki Sixx". It is by Jake Brown and is available on paperback through www.blackmarketpublishing.com... JEFF SCOTT SOTO's Prism album is out in Japan via Metal Frontier Record. The release includes exclusive bonus tracks 'Send Her My Love', 'Again 2 Be Found' (live) and 'Stand Up' (live)... Former ELEC-TRIC BOYS frontman CONNY BLOOM has begun mixing his forthcoming live album, Conny Bloom Live, in Stockholm, Sweden. 18 tracks will appear on the release, including 'All Lips & Hips' and 'Captain Of My Soul', alongside others. The set opens with a cover of EDGAR WINTER's 'Frankenstein'. The band line-up on this release includes Andy Christell, Tom Broman (ex-Electric Boys) and Per Wiberg (SPIRITUAL BEGGARS)... WARRANT guitarist Billy Morris is set to release new material under the moniker BILLY MORRIS BAND. For more info go to: www.BillyMorris.net/ for more... LIVING COLOUR's website, www.livingcolour.net, reports that the band have inked a deal with Sanctuary Records and are now finishing up recording their new album at Nova Sound studio. The band's Corey Glover has issued the following: "I wanted to say thanks to all of our friends and fans who have supported Living Colour over the years. We know that everyone is (patiently) waiting for the new CD; we are making all of the final touches now!"... STRYPER are set to record two new studio tracks for inclusion on a new Best Of Stryper album, due out in Spring 2003 through Hollywood Records. All four original members, Michael Sweet, Robert Sweet, Oz Fox and Tim Gaines, will enter the studio for the first time in over 11 years to record the songs. The Best Of CD will include the band's favourite songs plus the two new tracks, described as being "heavy and modern." It is being stressed that this is not a full-blown reunion... RUSH recently completed their 66-date 2002 tour with three dates in Brazil, the first time the band have performed in that country. The three Brazilian shows drew over 125,000 people with the Sao Paulo date having over 60,000 in attendance, the largest crowd that Rush has ever played to. The band's show in Rio was recorded and is in the process of being edited for release on DVD. The release date for this DVD, which will also include some behind the scenes footage, will be announced shortly... SLASH recently commented to MTV regarding the search for a singer for the yet-to-be-named Slash/Izzy/Duff/Matt project. Says Slash: "I'll know it when I hear it. Right off the bat, I'll know. We're just trying to find a really great fucking rock and roll singer; and it's really hard to find anybody that you'd consider genuine, and it's also somebody who's got to fit in with us. It's not impossible, but it's not easy. It could be somebody known, or somebody unknown, who's just a star and doesn't know it"... Guitarist Stevie Blaze (LILLIAN AXE, NEAR LIFE EXPERIENCE, ANGEL) recently revealed that Lillian's Live 2002 is due out in Japan in January, and as bonus material it will contain an acoustic version of 'Dying To Live' and a speech from Blaze to the Japanese fans. A new album and US tour dates are on tap for the spring, and after that Blaze will concentrate on putting a DVD together. Lillian Axe also will "more than likely" tour Japan in the summer. Finally, Blaze has six songs done for a solo album that he hopes to have finished by the summer... THUNDER are finishing up work on their new album, Shooting At The Sun, due out this month... HANOI ROCKS' new book, Mental Beats, is available now in Europe. The song book includes pictures, lyrics and chord charts for 21 Hanoi Rocks classics... KEN TAMPLIN's Wake The Nations album will be released this month via Frontiers/Now & Then. Guests on the release include: Marty Friedman (ex-MEGADETH), Reb Beach (WINGER), Doug Aldridge (WHITESNAKE, DIO), Richie Kotzen (MR. BIG, POISON), Jeff Scott Soto (YNGWIE MALMSTEEN, TALISMAN) and more... PLANET X keyboardist Derek Sherinian is currently working on his new solo album featuring Simon Phillips, Steve Lukather, Zakk Wylde, Billy Sheehan and Yngwie Malmsteen to name a few... NELSON has finished their new CD, to be released early in 2003... GREAT WHITE's new release, Thank You..., Goodnight, is now available. The set was recorded at the original line-up's farewell concert on New Year's Eve, 2001. Alongside the band's classic hits, the album also features two never heard before tracks, 'Play On' and 'Back On The Rhythm'. Great White, featuring Jack Russell and Mark



Whitesnake

Snakes, Scorpions and Other Creepy Crawlies...

By Martin Popoff

Folks are tsk tsk tsking the concept of Whitesnake hitting the road with just David Coverdale and Tommy Aldridge as past members, especially given the fact that the two guitarists in the re-vamped '80s juggernaut (Doug Aldrich and Reb Beach) are neither of the five who participated in the glory years or the gory years before. But Coverdale wins you over, the man sounding jovial, aristocratic, sublime and winkfully ironic at once as he simply tells it like it is, laughs aplenty. His enthusiasm is infectious, and the fact is, with those two cats, and with Tommy Aldridge and Marco Mendoza comprising the rhythm section (keyboardist Timothy Drury fills out the big band), Whitesnake '03 is a rock ripper.

Out now with Scorpions and Dokken, Whitesnake also have product to sell: a two CD compilation called Here I Go Again: The Whitesnake Collection, which actually comprises the big three albums from the band, Slide It In, Whitesnake and Slip Of The Tongue, plus six bonus tracks.

"Quite honestly," sez Dave (Would I lie to you?), "the agreement that I made with the Scorpions is that we are co-headlining, and I'm going to work an hour in the middle so it will be good for me to rebuild my stamina after so many years. So I was very, very happy to agree to be the meat in this particular sandwich. And looking at an hour, obviously there's going to be no messing around. We're not going to be doing 20 minute drums solos. Well, unless anything really disastrous happens. So I want to pack it up. And I'm also recording a Greatest Hits Live, which I've never done. I have a website, whitesnake.com, and my board members are most forthcoming with me about what they want and are desirous of, and number one is a live record. I haven't made a live album since 1983, and certainly there's nothing other than bootlegs which have 'Still Of The Night', 'Is This Love?', 'Here I Go Again', all that stuff, 'Slow An' Easy'."

"This is the House Of Whitesnake; I'm just redecorating it," continues the most British resident of from Lake Tahoe. "Not only redecorating it but putting a whole new bunch of interior decorators in there. You know, the bottom line with these musicians, they're extraordinary players. I said, 'I want you to look at the songs. I do not want to just simply re-create the songs. As long as the essence is secure.' My whole feeling is, I don't want to be a retro/cabaret act, going through the motions. Otherwise I'll just go back to Tahoe right now! Basically I said, I want you to approach the songs as if you had been involved in the original, how you would have done it. And now, 10, 12 years later, how would you contemporize those songs so it's not just a time capsule? So yeah, the songs are going to be very familiar, but the fire these guys are playing with... it's very powerful."

I asked David to articulate what he thinks of Doug (Dio) and Reb (Winger, Alice Cooper, Dokken) as guitarists.

"Well, actually, both of them yesterday started to tease each other with blues licks; very refreshing. I'm an old blues guitar fan. I keep saying to people, for instance with Reb... Winger, although I felt Winger was an excellent collection of musicians, they didn't have a great deal of rock credibility. So a couple of people came on my board saying, 'Oh my God! What's this going to be like?' And I'm going 'Hey, if you don't trust me, don't even bother coming here!' I don't listen to what musicians did with other line-ups. I listen to how they play and what I feel they can bring to Whitesnake and what I feel I can bring to them to take it further. I'm going to make sure there are no limitations on this. I mean for instance, we're doing 'Crying In The Rain', and Doug Aldrich is on fire on it, Martin! He's on fire. It is way cool. We have great players and they're lovely people. For God's sake, man! The two guitarists are actually going out to dinner with each other! I mean that, I've never known. The camaraderie... it's always been bullshit for the camera!" ☺

Scorpions

Ask The Axe!

By Martin Popoff

Joining Whitesnake on the summer's second biggest retro tour (Kiss and Aerosmith take top slot; Def Leppard and Thin Lizzy, third) is of course Scorpions. Guitarist Matthias Jabs comments on the plan and the motivation this time 'round, as well as a few insights into the next humstinger of an album...

"Well, we just toured - in the states at least - last summer, with Deep Purple and we missed out on Canada. One of the reasons why we said, 'Let's complete the tour,' so to speak, was because we played for only three months in the summer and obviously you don't make it everywhere. We'd like to play Canada, the eastern part especially, since we remember it was always a fantastic time. Not only Toronto, but also Quebec City, a very special area, where they speak French, and if you're English-only, you are (whistles and laughs). I thought it was a funny situation; I speak French so it helps a bit. So we decided to go on the road again, even though we have to finish the new album this year. And we're thinking, 'Oh, does it take away time from the recording schedule?' But we decided differently. It's great to go on the road, also with Whitesnake - it's a good opportunity - and play some of the places we haven't played in the summer. But we also converted the back lounge of our tour bus into a recording studio. So I think we get more done when we're on the road, you know, with all these long night rides. And after the show, everybody's wound up anyways. And all five are together and it's music from morning until late at night, so it should be the right inspiration and the right environment to write songs. Better than sitting at home."

And the direction of the next album? "If I would know now, I would promise you something," says Jabs. "But I can only hope that we are sticking to what we've been talking about all the time. We want to, basically, in the sense of a style, go back to what we think is the real Scorpions style, meaning the Blackout/Love At First Sling days. But obviously, it's 20 years later and therefore, song-wise, we can do what we are able to do these days. So something sounding like 2003/2004 but as far as songwriting and the edge, I would say, think about Blackout."

Funny, that's a carbon copy of what Rudolf (Schenker) told me a year ago. Is the stinger still attached? Time will tell...

REB BEACH 'Snake-Bitten!

WINGER's Reb Beach recently issued the following update about him scoring the coveted WHITESNAKE gig (alongside DIO guitarist Doug Aldrich): "It is no secret that I have been pursuing David for a long time, as Whitesnake's music runs through my veins. The time has come for me to get out there and kick some ass! Just the thought of going on this world tour with this spectacular band makes me so happy!"

"I've heard from a lot of Winger fans asking if this is the end for Winger. Kip and all the guys in Winger are my closest friends, and I don't think there will ever be an end to us writing and recording together. I'm sure there will be some down time in the next six months where I could shoot over to Kip's and write."

"I'm not sure of David's plans for a record, but I have some ideas for him, as well. For now, I am concentrating on the live thing, and the show David has in mind is really something. The song list is jaw-dropping! I had forgotten how many great songs there are."

"My instructional video has been halted because I am way too much of a perfectionist. I am making it with my friend Dan, and he is about ready to kill me. There may be some time off in April, and I'm hoping to finish it then."

MOTLEY CRUE - A Slue Of Releases In 2003!

According to a recent interview with Rolling Stone, MOTLEY CRUE will reissue 11 albums and release a box set in 2003. The band have inked a deal with Universal to re-release all of their albums with bonus tracks on April 1st. They will also issue a new greatest hits album on March 4th, DVD releases of Lewd, Crued & Tattooed and VH1 Behind the Music: Motley Crue in April and another video collection later in the year, and a career-spanning box set for the holiday season.

Nikki Sixx comments on bonus tracks: "A lot of times as an artist you'll say, 'These ten songs are what we think is the best pop for this record. It will get the message across the best.' But later you go back and say, 'That was really a great song, but it was a ballad and we didn't need two ballads on a record.' So now it's cool because the record is its own and then there's the bonus material, so you don't lump them all together."

Regarding the box set, Sixx continues: "It's going to be cumbersome to put together but it's going to be exciting for the buyer. I want them to go, 'Wow, I never thought I'd get my hands on the very first single. They only made a thousand of these things and here I finally get it.'"

In related news, Sixx is working out details for a new book deal: "It's called The Heroin Diaries. It's basically 1986 to 1987, Christmas morning to Christmas morning, my story through the making of the Girls, Girls, Girls record, the jets, the tours, the Rolling Stone cover, the overdoses and arrests, and a year later sitting there in front of the Christmas tree going, 'Fuck, nothing has changed. I'm still sitting here alone.' It's kind of like a peek into that very dark era."

As for his side-project BRIDES OF DESTRUCTION (which features guitarist Tracii Guns (L.A. GUNS), drummer Kris Kohls (ADEMA), guitarist John Corabi (ex-Motley Crue/Union) and vocalist London LeGrand), the band are demoing material and plan to "cut the album live off the floor." Sixx says that they "refuse to sit in the studio and let the music get bloated and polished."

As for the question being asked over and over about Ozzfest, Sixx says: "At this time there are NO plans of doing any kind of tour... 'til 2004 for Motley Crue."

DAVID LEE ROTH Sues VAN HALEN!

DAVID LEE ROTH has filed a lawsuit against his ex-VAN HALEN bandmates, accusing them of conspiring to keep money from him. The lawsuit filed Thursday in Superior Court alleges that Eddie Van Halen, Alex Van Halen and Michael Anthony diverted royalties and breached their fiduciary duty to Roth. The singer claims the band signed a deal with Warner Bros. in 1996 without his knowledge or authorization for increased royalties from album sales. He claims his financial losses were estimated to be at least \$200,000 at the end of 2001. The former frontman wants an accountant to review the royalties and determine the interest on them. Roth also seeks unspecified compensatory, exemplary and punitive damages and legal fees.

SAGA New Album And DVD Tracklistings Revealed!

SAGA will release their new album, *Marathon*, on February 17th via SPV. Says Jim Chrichton: "The new songs are a continuation of Full Circle and House Of Cards - the most successful work of our career". *Marathon* has the following tracklisting: 'Marathon', 'How Are You?', 'Breathing Lessons', 'Hands Up', 'Streets Of Gold (Chapter 14)', 'Blind Side Of The Heart', 'Return To Forever', 'Too Deep', 'You Know I Know (Chapter 12)', 'Rise And Shine' and 'Worlds Apart (Chapter 16)'. A string of dates in support of the release will run from February 23rd to March 30th.

In other Saga release news, the band's long awaited DVD, *Silhouette*, is out on March 3rd. Contents include: Videoclips - 'Don't Be Late', 'Careful Where You Step', 'On The Loose', 'Amnesia', 'Wind Him Up', 'Catwalk', 'The Flyer', 'What Do I Know', 'Always There' and 'Money Talks'. Live Clips: 'The Perfectionist', 'Compromise', 'Ice Nice', 'Time's Up', 'Scratching The Surface', 'Don't Be Late', 'You're Not Alone', 'It's Time', 'Humble Stance' and 'Intermission'. Also included are interviews with all five members covering the complete Saga history.

RIKKI ROCKETT Glitter-Boy!

POISON drummer Rikki Rockett released his first solo record on January 7th. The album, entitled *Glitter 4 Your Soul*, contains 11 tracks of remakes of 1970s "glitter" songs by such artists as DAVID BOWIE ('Fame'), T. REX ('Rock On'), NEW YORK DOLLS ('Trash'), THE ROLLING STONES ('Star, Star'), ALICE COOPER ('Elected') and others. Rockett plays drums on all songs, with fellow Poison bandmates Bret Michaels and C.C. DeVille and former bandmate Blues Saraceno guesting.

"This record is about an era of music that liberated rock to a new level of social impact and still to this day inflicts its influence on just about everyone who is involved in the ranks of rock and roll knowingly or unknowingly," Rockett remarks. "This is a salute, not a reinvention. My commitment was to record a broad range of glitter music with today's tools, not reinvent it. It's simply my attempt to keep the music alive." The album can only be purchased off the website, www.glitter4yoursoul.com.

PLANET US To Hit The Studio!

PLANET US guitarist Neal Schon recently told www.melodicrock.com that the band (also featuring singer Sammy Hagar, drummer Deen Castronovo and bassist Michael Anthony) entered a San Francisco Bay Area studio on January 9th to begin recording their debut album.

"I've been at home writing and demoing material for the guys to check out. We were going to try to get started to early in December, but, when Deen came into town, he had a terrible bacterial infection in his finger and was not able to pound the skins. But I just spoke to him and he's ready to go. I spoke to Mike Anthony and he's also ready and so is Sammy... should be cool! I've got some nice tunes brewing. And yes, it will be a full CD - a conceptual CD."

Schon also mentioned that we can expect a new JOURNEY album after their next tour (their Red 13 EP is out through Sony this month) and another instrumental solo album called *Eye On You* (due out through Higher Octave).

Kendall are also on the road. Head to www.planetjr.com/ for dates... **AMERICAN DOG** have inked a deal with Germany's Ulfone Records and with an undisclosed label in South America... The label will release the band's newest album, *Red, White, Black & Blue*, throughout Europe this month. In the meantime, the band will be heading back into the studio briefly to record the track 'Take Your Whiskey Home' for the forthcoming **VAN HALEN** tribute CD, due out through Versailles Records in the US... **COMPANY OF SNAKES**, the band that features ex-**WHITESNAKE** guitarists Bernie Marsden and Micky Moody, is being put on hold until further notice, though the band is not splitting up. After the recent tour in Russia and Scandinavia the Company Of Snakes have no plans for any shows in the future, until the summer of next year at the earliest. There is a possibility of a Company of Snakes DVD to be shot sometime next year, and of course the band members are continuing with their various non-Company of Snakes projects... **MARK FERRARI (KEEL, COLD SWEAT, MEDICINE WHEEL)** will release his new solo album, *Lights Camera Action!* via Z Records... **CRUSH 40** (known also as **SONS OF ANGELS** in Japan) will release their Thrill Of The Feel album in Europe through Frontiers. The band features guitarist Jun Senoue and Johnny Gioeli... Sweden's **STOCKHOLM SHOWDOWN** will soon release their new album, *Last Call To Paradise*, featuring ex-**PRINCESS PANG** members Stefan "Sterta" Byrstedt (vocals, guitar) and Ronnie "Roze" Johansson (bass, vocals). As well, the Princess Pang track 'South Street Kids' appears on the new Metal Blade 20th Anniversary boxed set. Ronnie, Stefan and Peter played together in the original Princess Pang but parted ways in 1988 due to a family tragedy that struck Stefan... The new **CHEAP TRICK** album will be released through JVC Japan. In other news, Cheap Trick filmed the song 'Surrender' as part of a bar scene that will be included in the new Eddie Murphy/Jeff Garlin film: *Daddy Day Care*... Former **WHITE LION** frontman **MIKE TRAMP** is set to release his next solo record, *More To Life Than This*, in April. He added at his website www.miketrap.com: "I'm recording in Copenhagen, and I am extremely happy and proud of the songs that I have written this time. It's going to rock your socks off!" The album was recorded at Sweet Silence studios in Copenhagen, Denmark with producer Flemming Rasmussen (**METALLICA**, **DEEP PURPLE**). Guitarist Steve Lukather (**TOTO**) guests on a couple of the tracks... **MOLLY HATCHET** is releasing a 2CD live set called *Locked And Loaded*, due out through SPV Recordings on February 24th. The CD was recorded in Germany as the band "consider it to be their home away from home." Molly Hatchet is comprised of guitarist/vocalist Bobby Ingram, vocalist Phil McCormack, keyboardist/vocalist John Galvin, guitarist Russ Maxwell, bassist/vocalist Jerry Scott and drummer Shawn Beamer. The performances were recorded at the Wacken Festival, Hamburg and Bremen, Germany... **KIP WINGER** has joined the **ALAN PARSONS PROJECT** for their 2003 tour. Check www.thevenueonline.info/site3/tourdate.htm for dates... **EVERY MOTHER'S NIGHTMARE** have just released a live CD entitled *Live Songs from Somewhere*. This CD contains songs from their early career to the present and has two new songs. Check their website at www.emnonline.net for more information... **PRETTY BOY FLOYD** "have been busy working on a new record. We are going to record it ourselves and then shop it to some labels. Check out prettyboyfloydonline.com for more info"... **MOTLEY CRUE**'s Vince Neil took part in a new reality show called *The Surreal Life*, which aired in January in the US. Vince was locked in a house Big Brother-style with other "celebrities" including MC Hammer, Corey Feldman and Gabrielle Carteris... **TALISMAN**'s new album will be called *Cats & Dogs*. The collection is currently being mixed in Boston by Jeff Scott Soto and John Ellis. The album will be released in April or May... **MIDNIGHT ANGEL** have entered the studio to start recording their debut for FastLane Records. The band are described as infectious melodic hard rock with huge hooks and a guitar-driven razor edge sound. A free MP3 download will be available shortly. For more info on Midnight Angel go to www.fastlanerecords.com... **SEVENTH KEY**'s Billy Greer (**KANSAS**, ex-**STREETS**) and Mike Slamer (**Streets**, **STEELHOUSE LANE**) are currently busy writing and recording songs for the group's second album in Slamer's studios in LA. According to Billy Greer: "the material we are writing is great and we are all very excited with the new ideas." The recording will wrap up this month. A Fall 2003 release is expected... **DRIVE, SHE SAID**'s Mark Mangold, Al Fritsch and Jonathan Mover are finished with the recording and post-production work for the band's fifth studio album, *Real Life*. The album will be released on March 24th, 2003 through Frontiers/Now & Then in Europe

and Marquee/Avalon in Japan... The **WILDHEARTS** will release a DVD in March. The disc will feature every promo clip the band have filmed, with commentary from Ginger on each clip. The band are also planning to release another DVD later on in 2003, which will be more "warts 'n' all"... **RIVERDOGS** original guitarist Vivian Campbell (**DEF LEPPARD**) recently did some writing with the other members of the band for a new album, due out later in 2003... **THE SIGN** are working on their second album, tentatively titled *The Second Coming*... **CONTAGIOUS** have begun writing material for their second album for Z Records. The album has the working title *Mule Britannia* and recording is expected to begin in April/May with a release planned for late summer... **TALON** are in pre-production for their second full-length album. The band are currently demoing tracks and will begin tracking with producer Mikey Davis at his L.A. studio soon. A summer release is expected... **MARILLION** have a few new discs ready for release in the near future. First up is *Brave Live 2002*, on both CD and DVD. The show was recorded at the Marillion Convention 2002. Also due is a new fan club-only release of their latest Christmas disc, *Santa And His Elvis*. Also coming soon is the official biography on the band written by Jon Collins. Entitled *Separated Out*, the book chronicles the entire history of the band from the early '80s until now. There are also rumours of a Marillion convention hitting the US this year, which would include a performance (or two) from the band... Former **BLACK N BLUE** vocalist Jaime St. James recently inked a management agreement with Jeff Keller Management. St. James is currently in the studio recording new material with the assistance of **WARRANT**'s Billy Morris... Former **ALMIGHTY** singer Ricky Warwick has released a new solo acoustic album in Japan called *Tattoos And Alibis*. The album was recorded at **DEF LEPPARD** singer Joe Elliott's home studio in Dublin, Ireland and was produced by Elliott. The Lep's have taken Warwick along on their current Japanese tour to open each show with a 20 minute acoustic gig... **HANOI ROCKS**' upcoming Japanese tour in support of their *Twelve Shots On The Rocks* album kicks off on February 21st at the Kosei Nenkin Hall in Tokyo. Dates conclude on March 3rd at NHK Hall in Osaka... **CINDERELLA** frontman Tom Keifer made rock 'n' roll history recently as the first ever hard rock artist to perform live at the Grand Ole Opry at the Ryman in Nashville, Tennessee... **HEAVY BONES/CATS IN BOOTS** vocalist Joel Ellis has revealed to melodicrock.com that himself and guitarist Takashi O'Hashi plan to do a *Cats In Boots* reunion tour in Japan. They will also record a new album for release in Japan and possibly Europe. The tour will begin with an appearance at the J/C Festival in May. In related news, Ellis will soon begin production on a heavier project that he will shop for a worldwide release deal... Melodicrock.com reports that LA band **GUYN-ER**, featuring original **BANG TANGO** guitarist Mark Knight and Mark Tremaglia, are currently recording an album for a 2003 release. Knight has been writing with singer Joe Roncetti for the release. Exclusive MP3s and videos are available at www.guyn-er.info... **VANDENBERG** have apparently reformed with a new line-up featuring original guitarist Adrian Vandenberg (ex-**WHITESNAKE**) and singer Bert Heerink... Former **TRIX-TER** members Steve Brown (guitars) and PJ Farley (bass) have a new band called **40 FT. RINGO**. The debut album, *Funny Thing*, will be released by Swedish label Atenzia Records in March... **GOTTHARD** are set to release their new album *Human Zoo*, on February 24th. The album was produced by Marc Tanner... Frontiers/Now & Then have signed a deal with former **TOTO** singer Joseph Williams' new project, **VERTIGO**. The band are currently recording a new album in LA with producer Fabrizio V Zee Grossi (**STEVE VAI**, **MICK JONES**, **KANE ROBERTS**)... Keyboardist **JON LORD** (ex-**DEEP PURPLE**) will tour Australia beginning on January 23rd at the Sydney Opera House in Sydney. The dates will wrap up on March 2nd at King's Park in Perth. The tour will include a full orchestra and music from the albums *Pictured Within*, *The Gemini Suite* and *Sarabande*. The February 15th date at the Hyatt Regency in Coolool will be filmed, possibly for a future CD/DVD release... **T. REX** percussionist Mick Finn passed away on January 11th. The cause of death is yet to be announced... Miami, Florida's Lascivious Records are set to release **SAIGON KICK** frontman **MATT KRAMER**'s new solo album, *War & Peas*. The album is described as "a raw self-produced hard rock reflection of the changing times"... The Oakland Tribune recently spoke with guitarist Vivian Campbell about his band, **DEF LEPPARD**. Campbell told the paper: "I don't think that Def Leppard has ever been a heavy metal band. Certainly in the early days, it was part of that movement and it got lumped in with that whole new wave of British heavy metal. Def Leppard has been a pop band disguised as a rock band."

Together for a little over two years, the young men in *Silvertide* have already opened for Aerosmith, Alice Cooper and Journey, signed to J Records, issued a kick ass EP and are in the midst of recording their debut full-length album. Forget about fancy image or oddball gimmicks, this is no-frills honest to goodness rock 'n' roll, just the way it used to be.

Charismatic lead guitarist Nick Perri calls from hometown Philadelphia to talk about his band, a band that is garnering some serious attention.



By Aaron Small

SILVERTIDE

Rock's Next Renegades

Visit www.silvertidemusic.com where you can download the entire three song EP, *American Excess*, free of charge. Perri explains that although the band is giving away their music, they have good reason for doing so. "The goal of the EP was never to sell tons of copies and have a single and video. The EP was meant to be an underground thing, just to get the word out. Even if you go to buy it in the store, you're only paying two or three dollars for it. That's because we weren't concerned with making money. We wanted people to find out about the band through good old-fashioned word of mouth. We didn't want to just appear on MTV. We wanted to start from the bottom, the grass roots method, and build a really strong foundation of fans all across the country. Then we'll come out with the album and single and video. Obviously then we wouldn't be super excited about you downloading it. But for now it's cool."

Will the three songs from *American Excess* appear on the upcoming album? "To be 100% honest, I don't know. Only because we've got 40 some tunes. We're going to narrow them down to 20 and then down to 12. It will come down to what are the 12 best songs? Those are the ones that are going to go on the album, which should come out in April or May."

With a sound that combines '70s rock like old Aerosmith and faster Zeppelin mixed with The Black Crowes and a touch of Buckcherry, *Silvertide* have been packing bars throughout Pennsylvania. Nick prefers "not to get specific" when asked about his music. Opting instead for the simple, but all-encom-

passing "rock 'n' roll. This is the kind of music that comes out of us. We were all raised listening to '60s and '70s rock 'n' roll from our parents. We all came from the same place. That's the common chord between us all. When we started playing music and writing songs, that's what came out. It was never like let's try to sound like this. As far as the comparison to The Black Crowes, people say that but it's only because they're the last band that's done anything remotely in the same genre in the last ten years. None of us ever listened to The Black Crowes actually. I didn't buy my first Black Crowes record until after I kept hearing people say we sound a bit like them. The same goes for everyone else in the band. I think we had the same influences they had. Also, when you hear the full album, you'll hear all of our influences. Right now you only have the EP, three songs; that's a lot less of a palate to work with. With 12 songs you can paint more pictures. We're looking forward to showing people the blues side, the acoustic side, the trippy side, the rock 'n' roll side. It's all rock 'n' roll and I like it." ☺

Leppard will soon release the third single from their X album. The 'Long Long Way To Go' single will include live acoustic versions of 'Now' and 'Hysteria', live versions of 'Long Long Way To Go' and 'Now' and the previously unreleased '10 X Bigger Than Love' and 'Gimme A Job'... **TNT's** new EP *Taste*, will be released this spring. The set is to feature new tracks, demo material (Tell No Tales era) and possibly a rare live track. Tracks to be featured on the release include: 'Satellite', 'Hey Love', 'Live Today', 'Give Me A Sign', 'Magic Little Nightmare' and 'Destiny' (demo)... **ROBERT PLANT** has been nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Male Rock Vocal Performance for the track 'Darkness, Darkness' and for Best Rock Album for *Dreamland*... Swedish Southern Rockers **BACKDRAFT** release their new album, *Here To Save You All*, on February 25th. For info on the band go to www.backdraftweb.com... **MILLION** keyboardist Mikael Bohnke has left the band to spend more time with his new daughter and the rest of his family. His replacement is Johan Bergquist who played keyboards on the last **HAMMERFALL** release. Million will soon release a new single, 'Shadow Of The Cross', which has a video directed by Harrison Funk (**MICHAEL JACKSON, 38 SPECIAL, VAN HALEN**)... **FOGHAT**, whose frontman, Lonesome Dave Peverett passed away three years ago, will release their first studio album since 1995, *Family Joules*, on March 1st. The band's current line-up features Roger Earl (drums), Tony Stevens (bass), Bryan Bassett (guitar) and Charlie Huhn (vocals, guitar). For more on the band go to: www.foghat.net... **STEELHEART's** lead singer Michael Matijevic is currently working on his new album. "I have written about 40 songs to choose from," he added recently. "The most important thing is I found my true direction in music. I have also worked with the new **GUNS N' ROSES** side-project with Slash, Izzy, Duff and Matt. I have written melodies, lyrics and sang on four songs. Where will that go we do not know; we will see what the future beholds"... **SKID ROW**, who are currently looking for a label deal for their new *Thick Skin* album (which they've recorded twice), have scheduled a string of dates in March. The band are also hard at work editing their first DVD, *Under The Skin: The Making Of Thick Skin*. The disc takes you from the songwriting process through the recording of the new record. It includes

behind the scenes footage from rehearsal, the recording studio, and the infamous Skid House, as well as bonus footage that shows the Skids outside their musical environment. The DVD will be released on April 30th to coincide with the release of *Thick Skin*... **PRAYING MANTIS's** new studio album is entitled *The Journey Never Ends*. The album features two lead singers: John Sloman (ex-**URIAH HEPP, LONE STAR, GARY MOORE**) and Doogie White (ex-**RAINBOW, YNGWIE MALMSTEEN**). An April release is expected through Frontiers/Now & Then... **YES** have postponed their Australian tour until later in 2003 due to a back injury sustained by Rick Wakeman... **LOVE/HATE** featuring **RATT's** Jizzy Pearl will be in the UK in April. They'll perform at London's Underworld on April 16th, and at The Sugar Mill in Stoke On Trent on April 22nd... **HESS**, featuring **HAREM SCAREM** singer/songwriter Harry Hess, have completed their debut album, *Just Another Day*. Musicians on the album include: Eric Martin (ex-**MR. BIG**), Peter Lesperance (Harem Scarem), Darren Smith (ex-Harem Scarem), Mike Turner (ex-**OUR LADY PEACE**), Justin Abedin, Mike Borkosky (LEE AARON, ALANNAH MYLES), Creighton Doane (Harem Scarem, ex-**HONEYMOON SUITE**) and Ray Coburn (ex-Honeymoon Suite). *Just Another Day* is due out through Frontiers/Now & Then in April... **BRITNY FOX's** new album, *Heavy Elements*, was produced by Tommy Paris and Michael Kelly Smith. A July release through Spitfire is expected... L/P bassist Jeff Pilson says that he's working on a new **WAR AND PEACE** record - he's got eight songs written, four recorded... Since Cadillac hooked up with **LED ZEPPELIN** early last year as part of a marketing campaign called "Break Through", the sales of Cadillac cars rose 16 percent, according to Cadillac advertising director Kim Kosak. "We're now No. 1," supplanting Lexus and Mercedes, said Kosak... **TESLA** drummer Troy Luccketta says the group's debut studio album for Sanctuary Records will indeed surface this year. "We're so close to finishing up all the writing," he says. "I'd say we've got probably about 25, 30 songs, and we're getting ready to narrow it down and record it. It's going great." As for a release date, "summer, fall, either/or. We would prefer summer if we could pull it together. We're working on it." ☺

UFO

Schenker's Out ... AGAIN!

In a rather tersely worded statement on his Internet bulletin board, **MICHAEL SCHENKER's** manager/girlfriend/confidant, Bela Piper posts: "Michael Schenker quits UFO. He gives back his 50%, so they can tour (without Michael Schenker). Beware, if you buy a UFO concert ticket, it will be without Michael Schenker. Don't be fooled again."

About the departure, bassist Pete Way responded: "What a surprise! Although when I think about it, I guess it isn't. I have been so involved in my solo things that UFO has gone to the back of my mind. Phil (Mogg - singer) had called me the previous week and said he was going to approach Michael about the UFO situation. The fans really deserve better than they get. We truly want to shake the world with the band and not turn it into a joke with all the rubbish going down. I have to say I am disappointed that things did not work out with Michael but I have to say I look forward to trying to make up for lost time. And doing it in the style and dignity that UFO fans demand. It may take time to get it together but be ready for something special."

Meanwhile, Way's new album, *Alive In Cleveland* (recorded at the Revolution in Cleveland October 4th, 2002) and his solo acoustic live CD, *Acoustic Animal*, will be released this year. Another release that might finally surface this year is the self-titled debut from **THE PLOT**, Pete's side-project with UFO mate Michael Schenker on guitar and Jeff Martin (**RACER X, BADLANDS, MSG**) on drums.

Way is planning a US solo tour. His band will feature former UFO guitarist Paul Chapman. Scheduled dates include February 23rd - The Revolution - Parma, OH and March 15th - Penny Road Pub - Barrington, IL.

AEROSMITH/KISS

It's Official!

AEROSMITH and **KISS** will embark on a co-headlining North American tour beginning in August and running through October, sources confirm. The tour of approximately 40 dates will be produced by Clear Channel Entertainment and is expected to play 90% amphitheaters, with arenas and possibly a couple of stadiums also in the mix. Kiss will perform in full make-up, sources say, and Aerosmith will be touring in support of a new Columbia blues album.

In **KISS** tour news, their February 28th symphonic show in Melbourne, Australia will go ahead with or without guitarist **ACE FREHLEY**. Ace has yet to decide if he'll join the rest of the group for the performance, which will be filmed and recorded for a future release. At the show **KISS** will play a short set by themselves, followed by a few tracks with a string section and then about ten more tracks backed by the full Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Meanwhile, the **KISS** shows on March 11th, 12th and 13th at Tokyo's legendary Budokan have all sold out and they have added a March 15th date at Yokohama, Japan's Yokohama Arena. On Sunday, March 16, **KISS** will perform a very special show in the intimate setting of the Rain In The Desert inside The Palms Casino Resort.

Finally, the **KISS** cover of 'Do You Remember Rock 'N' Roll Radio' from the **RAMONES** tribute CD *We're A Happy Family*, has been added to radio. The album was set for a February 11th release.

LYNCH/PILSON

Album Sample On-line Now!

The **LYNCH/PILSON** project's new album, *Wicked Underground*, has been mixed and mastered and is set for release on April 8th through Spitfire. Says George Lynch: "Jeff and I are very, very excited about this and can't wait to get it out for everyone to hear." A track from the album can be sampled now at: <http://www.georgelynch.com/lynchpilson.htm>. *Wicked Underground* has the following tracklisting: 'Breath & A Scream', 'Beast In The Box', 'When You Bleed', 'Vaccine', 'Ever Higher', 'Zero The End', 'The Evil That You Are', 'Awaken', 'Cromantic', 'Goodbye Utopia', 'Inner View' and 'Closer To None'.

STEVE VAI - "Studio Hell!"

Guitar virtuoso STEVE VAI recently revealed that he has commenced work on a concept album of sorts, planned to feature multiple vocalists. However, "any resemblance between what I'm doing and Santana is purely coincidental," he says. While he jokes that the project is "way too ambitious" and that he's currently "in the middle of studio hell," Vai admits "it's a lot of fun. It's actually a musical with characters, a plot and all this interesting stuff - and way over-the-top guitar playing that'll give everybody a hernia." Meanwhile, Vai's tentatively titled *Freak Show Excess* live DVD - recorded during his 2001 European tour - will likely not be released until the fall. "I had to stop working on it so I could finish the record," he admits.

In other news, licensing agreements are being finalized on the next installments of *The Secret Jewel Box Set - Archives Vol. 3* and *Vol. 4*. The two CDs compile all the music Steve has contributed to other projects and records, and includes the often elusive bonus tracks appearing on Japanese releases. Also featured are the JIMI HENDRIX *In From The Storm* tribute performances with the London Symphony Orchestra, 'Queen Of The Night' from Angelica and 'The Rumble' from *Songs Of West Side Story* with CHICK COREA. The following are the tentative tracklistings: *Archives Vol. 3* - 'Speed', 'Rumble', 'Queen Of The Night', 'Western Vacation', 'Dirty Love', 'Can't Afford No Shoes', 'I Promise Not To Cum In Your Mouth', 'Let It Go', 'Funk Me Tender', 'Axis, Bold As Love', 'Drifting', 'Feed My Frankenstein' and 'SuperGirl'. *Archives Vol. 4* - 'Just Cartilage', 'The Murder', 'San San Na Na Bioshi', 'Selfless Love', 'Maple Leafs', 'Fool For Your Lovin' (Vai Voltage Mix)', 'Sofa', 'Rise', 'Ease', 'Home', 'Autumn In Nepal', 'There's Still Hope' and 'Sweet Lady Luck'. In other news, Vai is working in his home studio with bass legend and former David Lee Roth bandmate BILLY SHEEHAN.

YARDBIRDS Comeback To Feature Axe Legends!

The first new album from the YARDBIRDS since 1967, entitled *Birdland*, will feature guest performances from guitarists SLASH, STEVE VAI and QUEEN's Brian May, among others. Mainly recorded at Vai's L.A. studio Mothership, the new album has the following tracklisting: 'I'm Not Talking', 'Crying Out For Love', 'The Nazz Are Blue', 'For Your Love' (feat. John Rzeznik - GOO GOO DOLLS), 'Please Don't Tell Me 'Bout The News', 'Train Kept A Rolling' (feat. JOE SATRIANI), 'Mr. Saboteur', 'Shapes Of Things' (feat. Steve Vai), 'My Blind Life' (feat. JEFF BECK), 'Over, Under, Sideways, Down' (feat. Slash), 'Mr. You're A Better Man Than I' (feat. Brian May), 'Mystery Of Being', 'Dream Within A Dream', 'Happenings Ten Years Time Ago' (feat. STEVE LUKATHER) and 'An Original Man (A Song For Keith)'.

The new album is out through Favored Nations on April 22nd. The Yardbirds line-up features founding members Chris Dreja (rhythm guitar/backing vocals) and Jim McCarty (drums/backing vocals), Gypie Mayo (lead guitar/backing vocals - ex-DR. FEELGOOD), John Idan (bass/lead vocals) and Alan Glen (harmonica/backing vocals - ex-NINE BELOW ZERO, LITTLE AXE).

Says Chris Dreja: "To make our first album in so many years has been a lasting ambition of ours. We wanted to do our original songs and our new ones with modern production while preserving the essence of our sound. It was a labor of love, and we're grateful to everyone who helped - our guest musicians and especially to Steve Vai. To me, it doesn't sound like we've been away for 35 years. The Yardbirds are still a kick-ass, high-energy band - and that comes across on this album."

GEORGE LYNCH - Solo CD Delayed!

GEORGE LYNCH has delayed the release of his upcoming solo album. In the meantime he has completed three tracks that are available on an EP entitled *The Lynch That Stole Riffness*. The tracks are called 'Blue Sky', 'Shinedown' and 'Static Reaction'. Says George: "These are brand new tracks that should give everyone an idea of the direction of my solo CD that I hope to continue working on early in the new year." To order the disc go to the Mob Shop at Lynch's website at http://www.georgelynch.com/mobshop/html/body_help.html. In other news, two of Lynch's video titles are now available on DVD: *George Lynch SGR* and *George Lynch Guitar Bible*.

JOHN PETRUCCI - Solo Album Update!

DREAM THEATER guitarist John Petrucci served as the opening act for the 2001 G3 tour, for which he wrote and performed a great deal of new material. He subsequently entered the studio to record his debut solo album with DIXIE DREGS bassist Dave LaRue and Boston-based drummer Dave DiCenzo, but then came the release of DT's *Six Degrees Of Inner Turbulence* and a year-long world tour. But don't think he's forgotten about the project. "I'm continuing work on it," he says. "I started it a year ago, went on the road from January to November or so and (just) got back into the studio. I hope to finish it up very, very soon. Dream Theater's going to go into the studio around March, so I want to have mine wrapped up by then and get it out in the summer, so we could do a G3 thing or something like that." Expect Dream Theater's new album to surface in late fall, with a tour to follow in January.

MARTY FRIEDMAN - Hits The Road!

Former MEGADETH axeman posted the following update at his website (www.martyfriedman.com) recently: "Marty is in Japan now continuing a massive promotional tour for Music For Speeding (out now with two bonus tracks: 'Transistor' and 'Thais'). The tour started with two weeks of all day live radio interviews and jam sessions, with stations in Tokyo and nationwide. Marty reached an approximate three million listeners with the radio portion of the promotion. Next up is a nationwide promo/seminar tour sponsored by equipment giant Roland/Boss. Marty spent two days at the Roland factory trying out secret new gear updates and advising the staff about ways to make the gear even better. Marty has been getting into the updates of the VG-88 effects unit which contains some truly jaw-dropping sounds. The initial reviews of the record in Japan have been great, and many non-metal, non-guitar magazines and radio stations are jumping on Marty's bandwagon for the first time. At the same time, European promotion is awaiting Marty as the European release is in February. He will hit six countries on this trip. Moria Records in Brazil will release MFS in South America. In North America, Steve Vai's Favored Nations is moving forward with promoting the spring release of MFS."

According to a recent press release, there is a new Blackmore's Night studio album in the making for release in 2003. As well, their first DVD is to be completed and released in 2003. Their touring schedule will begin in Europe around mid-May and for North American fans, watch for dates in the fall of 2003. The North American release of the live double CD of the Gronigen Holland show, *Past Times With Good Company* is scheduled for February 25... In a strange turn of events, Z Records has pulled out of the negotiations with guitarist JOHN SYKES (TYGERS OF PANTANG, THIN LIZZY, WHITESNAKE, BLUE MURDER, SYKES). The label was working on releasing his Japanese solo albums in Europe... German guitar maestro AXEL RUDI PELL released a special 2CD live album entitled *Knights Live* on February 4th. The 100+ minute set was recorded live (authentic, with no overdubs) at The Zeche in Bochum, Germany during Pell's 2002 European Tour... BYRD, featuring guitarist James Byrd, have inked a deal for a third album with Lion Music. The release will again feature the vocals of Michael James Flatters (TAKARA). The album will be recorded at the beginning of 2003. For more information visit www.jamesbyrd.com... SUPERTRAMP guitarist CARL VERHEYEN is currently finishing the recording session in the L.A.-based World Class Audio studios for his new album. Together with Supertramp bassist Cliff Hugo and DAVID CROSBY drummer Steve DiStanislaw they have recorded ten tracks for the yet-untitled album. The release will include a cover of the BEATLES 'Yes It Is', and will be released this month, followed by a European tour... In addition to announcing the construction of PAIN MUSEUM, HALFORD guitarist Metal Mike is in development with several manufacturers on his own signature equipment line. Jackson Guitars has already delivered the first of Metal Mike's Preferred Artists Choice signature guitars, which they plan to have available in stores by summer. As well, Digitech will release and announce a series of guitar effects products featuring Metal Mike's Signature sound presets. Asked about the sounds Mike replied: "They are Metal. Period"... STEVE MORSE's new DVD is entitled *Sects, Dregs & Rock 'N Roll*. The disc includes footage shot live in 2001 and also features bonus live footage from 1992. Other features include: Guitar Show interview, a promo clip for 'Cruise Missile', guitar clinic, Roger Glover and Ian Gillan interview and a photo gallery... Aside from working with STEVE VAI, BILLY SHEEHAN is currently in his home studio working on an upcoming bass record... THE FALLEN have renewed their allegiance with BC Rich Guitars for 2003. After receiving their new shipment of guitars for the new year, the band made an appearance at the BC Rich booth at the recent NAMM show to meet fans and sign copies of their Metal Blade debut, *Front Toward Enemy*. The Fallen are featured in the new 2003 BC Rich catalog, alongside the likes of Kerry King of SLAYER and Jared Anderson of HATE ETHERNAL... BRUCE KULICK's new album is called *Transformer*, and features Brent Fitz and John Corabi. ☺



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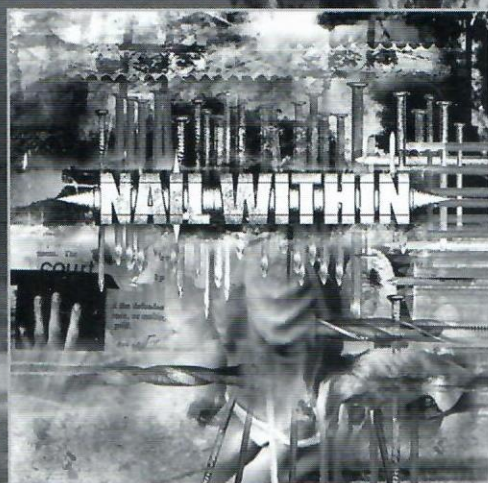
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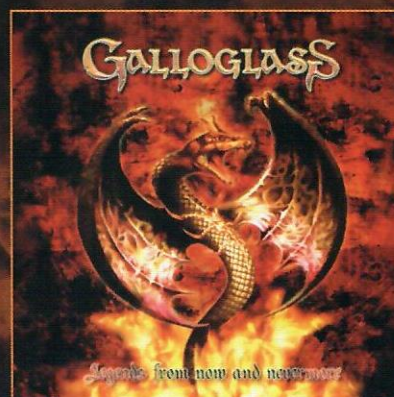
What connects AC/DC, Motörhead and Rose Tattoo? Of course, all three bands are considered Hard Rock classics and after all this time there is a band who is prepared to lay claim to the inheritance of the above-named bands. That's how "Battle-Tested" happened, GUN BARREL's brand new album - produced, mixed and mastered by Piet Sielek (Iron Savior, Heavenly, Blind Guardian, Paragon) and Uwe Lulis (Grave Digger, Rebellion, Wizard...).

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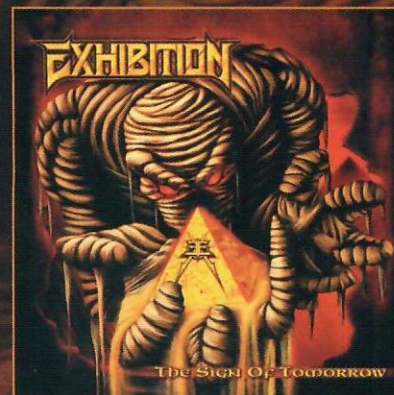
Melodic Epic Power Metal

This debut album, produced by Olaf Reitmeier (Luce Turilli, Gun Barrel, Kamelot) truly sounds like a perfect synthesis of old German speed metal à la Helloween feat. Kai Hansen or early Blind Guardian, and the earlier works of Helstar and Fates Warning and has already raised the bar to an ambitious height. The Songs underline the Hannoverians' clear preference for powerful melodies and well thought out song structures..

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CRADLE



Cradle Of Filth: black metal gods or corporate sell-outs? There are plenty of black metal purists that will argue for the latter for any number of reasons; their music is just too damn melodic between the screeches and the blastbeats, the band name is just too damn visible on the record store shelves and the streets, they're signed to a major label called Epic/Sony, they have way too many fans to be considered black metal, which is a phenomenon of the underground. Be that as it may, Cradle Of Filth remains at the top of the black metal heap, and listening to their new opus of cinematic venom and violence called *Damnation And A Day*, it's clear that they are going to stay there for a long time to come. The message is clear; join the black metal evilution, or get the hell out of the way if you don't want to be crushed.

If you look at Cradle's catalogue of material of the last year, though, you might be justified in saying that the band is a little too prominent to be taken seriously, perhaps bent instead on milking the fans. Since the release of the *Bitter Suites To Succubi* EP in 2001, the Cradle has released a *Best Of* called *Lovecraft & Witch Hearts*, a live opus entitled *Live Bait For The Dead*, and the *Heavy*, *Left-Handed And Candid* DVD all in 2002, with *Damnation And A Day* scheduled to hit the shelves in March. Singer/founder Dani Filth, of course, won't hear any of it.

"We're a workaholic band. People have said that there seems to be an influx of too much stuff, but I always say to them that if you're into a band you can never have enough stuff. *Bitter Suites* is something that we endeavoured to do when we left *Music For Nations*. We had a period where we prostituted ourselves amongst other labels and ended up with Sony, but in that short space of time we decided to flex our muscles and our freedom. We had some extra material and decided to put it out as an EP, and when we were in the studio,

related - but I think that's one of the main reasons we are where we are today."

On to *Damnation And A Day*, an album (from a fan's point of view) that is bigger and bolder than anything Cradle Of Filth have done previously. A concept album that links Adam and Eve's banishment from the Garden Of Eden to the Apocalypse, mixed by Anthrax guitarist/producer Rob Caggiano, it is an 80 minute epic of monolithic proportions and soul-crushing intensity. Dani agrees, but there is no rhetoric spouted about natural development or wanting to venture into parts unknown. Hell no. *Damnation And A Day* is simply the next step towards world domination for Cradle Of Filth, something they've had in hand for quite some time.

One of the main ingredients in C.O.F.'s *Damnation* formula was the use of a full-blown choir and orchestra, recorded in Budapest, Hungary.

"Lots of our albums have orchestral pieces on them, and on the last one (*Midian*) we got as far as having a very small orchestra, but this was the first time we undertook something

"We're still friends and I spoke to him a couple of weeks ago, but he didn't really contribute to the album that much. He had a lot of personal differences - not with the band as such - but his motivation was fuelled by something else. He was in the process of getting married, and I think he kind of lost the thread of what we were doing. We were just being 'Heads down, see you at the end,' so when we went into the studio we decided to have a word about it, and from both sides it was agreed that it was better if he pursued his own path. I can't say how he feels about that now, and we do miss him, but we're quite happy as a five piece because the album was recorded 100% as a five piece. When we go out - we're touring everywhere this bloody year - we do have someone to fill in, but with five it seems that there are less people to spoil the broth."

It seems that member changes are the spice of life for Cradle Of Filth. Not an album goes by without someone being replaced.

"Well, if a machine breaks a cog and it doesn't work anymore, you've got to replace the cog and well oil it," Dani says

CRADLE OF FILTH

by Carl Begai

that branched into re-doing some old stuff and putting a cover on there, and it grew that way. Of course, when a previous label finds out about one of their former bands signing to a major the first thing they want to do is get their *Best Of* out as quickly as possible, and when we found out about it we made sure that we were involved just so we could make sure that the fans were getting something worth having."

"Likewise, the live record was going to come out whether we liked it or not as well," Dani continues. "That was part of the DVD deal that I kind of found about later on, and when I did find out I made sure that we had a hand in making it rather than letting the record company do it on their own."

As for the remarkably consistent EP releases that rear their demonic heads between albums just to tide the fans over...

"The EPs never fill any more of our album quota towards our record deal," says Dani. "They don't constitute as an album. An album is a lot of hard work, but once an album is out of the way you've still got the energy in you and material floating about that you can get more songs out of. I mean, we've written four songs since finishing *Damnation And A Day* that we're hoping to put out with some other material we've already recorded. I shouldn't be talking about this now, but I'm gonna; *Damnation And A Day* and *Bitter Suites To Succubi* are going to be released together as a special edition six months after the initial release with some extra stuff thrown in for good measure."

"All this work, whether it's doing the albums or the EPs or designing the T-shirts, we just can't keep ourselves still," Dani adds. "I feel that when that happens you start to stagnate. The thing is, as a result of all our efforts, I took my first holiday in six years over Christmas. I've been that busy with the band. I went to India for three weeks, which meant that the work just stopped, so the moment I got back home I was back into it again. It's very stressful because the work in this band never stops - we had to cancel some shows in December because I developed a respiratory problem, which was stress

like this on such a large scale," says Dani. "It was fantastic. Myself, Martin (Powell/keyboards/violin), our engineer/producer Doug Cook and Dan Presley, who scored the music for a 60 piece orchestra and a 30 to 40 piece choir and is a twice-removed cousin of Elvis, went down to Budapest to record the orchestra. It was quite funny, really, because the first couple of days the orchestra was recording just the solo orchestral pieces, as if they were recording a soundtrack piece. It was all free form. The headphones came out only when those parts had been done and they moved on to the orchestral parts that are in the actual main hub of the song. They had to play along with the album, and when the first song they had to do came whipping through their headphones they dropped their instruments (laughs). 'What the fuck?!' It was a great moment; I have it captured on video."

Compared to *Midian*, Dani sees *Damnation And A Day* as a giant leap forward, but not solely due to the huge orchestral presence.

"The orchestra does make a difference, no question, but there are also different attacks on the vocals - they're deeper in places - and the guitars were down-tuned two steps in some places, making them much heavier. I think it gives the songs a much more mature feel when you add all these things together. We spent six months writing the new album and five months on and off recording it. There were a few weeks off here and there, but the initial six months we just plowed into it because we spent most of 2001 on the road and lost the flow, as it were, of writing. It took us about two months to get back into it, and at one point we moved to an old studio in Wales for a couple of weeks solely for the purpose of leaving the wives, girlfriends and other distractions back in England. I think that was the turning point as well, because we came out of that with 12 songs and 17 tracks total. With that in mind, there was no definitive plan."

Turns out Cradle Of Filth lost a guitarist along the way. Gian Pyres stepped down, according to Dani, due to a loss of interest in the band.

matter-of-factly. "We do so much each year that it becomes a dog's life; it becomes seven years as opposed to one. For example, Dave (Pybus/bass) has only been in the band a year-and-a-half but it feels like an eternity. I don't mean that in a bad way, but now that I think about it, he's a bigger cunt than the rest of 'em (laughs). Fact of the matter is that a year or more is enough to get tired of anybody if you live with them more than you do with your own family."

As to this business of Cradle Of Filth being slagged in black metal circles for their success, Dani could care less what the detractors think, quite confident in the band's place at the top o' the world.

"This album is testament enough to the fact that we haven't sold out," Dani states bluntly. "Hopefully this will be the nail in the coffin of our detractors, but I doubt it will be because there's always someone moaning about something or other. In life, there's so much to get into and too much to be a part of to have any spare time to be moaning about this and that, and these people that clog the internet with their apathy, it's apathetic in my opinion. We don't have the time to face these people and explain it all away. So basically, what I'm trying to say is that they can fuck off. We're not interested."

On a lighter note, discussion turns to Dani's four-year-old daughter. *Damnation And A Day* proves without a doubt that fatherhood hasn't domesticated the beloved Mr. Filth, but one has to wonder if his daughter understands what Daddy does for a living.

"She's actually big into *Lord Of The Rings* at the moment. She knows all the characters by name, and she's absolutely gutted that they raised the rating in England for the new one from PG to 12 because it means I can't take her to see it. But yeah, she knows about what I do and she thinks it's cool. I mean, if you live with the Addams Family you've got to be one of them."

Gives us hope for the future. It'll be interesting to see what she does musically when she does older. "Yeah," Dani agrees. "Either that or what she does with a knife (laughs)." ☺

MASTERPLAN

by Carl Begai

“still we go...”

If you're a fan of the present day Helloween - a fan that doesn't believe the band ended when guitarist Kai Hansen left and singer Michael Kiske got the boot - there is a new band worthy of your attention. In much the same way that Hansen exploded back onto the scene with Gamma Ray in 1989, guitarist Roland Grapow and drummer Uli Kusch have re-entered the fray with Masterplan, receiving rave reviews and high praise. The self-titled debut is, without a doubt, a vine taken from the Helloween pumpkin patch, featuring some of the best aspects of albums like *Master of the Rings*, *Time of the Oath*, *Better Than Raw* and *The Dark Ride* melded with Grapow's and Kusch's passion for Rainbow, Dio and Led Zeppelin, creating music that does a fine job of threatening their former band's status as one of Germany's top metal acts.



For the uninformed, Grapow and Kusch started Masterplan as an un-named side project with Symphony X singer Russell Allen in 2000, neither one of them having any intention of leaving Helloween. Shortly after the tour for *The Dark Ride*, however, they were given their walking papers, the other members of the band claiming that Grapow and Kusch were spending far too much time focusing on outside interests. The decision was made at that point to turn the project into a real band and the search for full-time members began. Once the line-up was complete - a line-up that features ex-Ark singer Jorn Lande and former Iron Savior bassist Jan S. Eckert - songwriting began in earnest, accompanied by a healthy buzz in the press that warned Helloween of a potential payback coming their way.

Whether out of fear or spite, Helloween guitarist Michael Weikath went on record several months ago slagging *The Dark Ride*, saying it was too dark and too far away from what Helloween should be, placing the blame more or less on Grapow's shoulders because he did most of the guitar work.

"I think it's just jealousy," Grapow says of Weikath's remarks. "I still don't know why he didn't show up in the studio. He was blaming the producer for not calling him, but he's a founding member of the band, so no one should have to call Mr. Weikath. I wrote two songs on the album and he blamed me and Uli for the album sounding so dark, but I played most of the guitars because he didn't show up. The song 'The Dark Ride', which I wrote, does have some pretty dark elements in it, some down-tuned guitars, but it's still a positive song and it still sounds like Helloween. Weiki is being ridiculous, but that's over and done with now."

Going in to do Masterplan, Grapow was advised by *The Dark Ride*'s producer Roy Z to try and make the best Helloween album possible. Masterplan is hardly a Helloween clone, but elements of that trademark sound do exist in the music. So, was it more important to remind people of where Masterplan came from, or to try and carve out a whole new identity right out of the box?

"We didn't want to lose all the Helloween fans, of course, but Uli and me, we aren't the typical kiddie-melody writers like Weiki," says Grapow. "I think Uli is more of a Helloween writer than (singer) Andi Deris for my taste. As for me, I was always a more defensive writer in Helloween, waiting to see what kind of material we had and filling in the blanks or trying something totally new. 'Time Of The Oath', for example, was a song that I wrote that was inspired by Dream Theater; it's not progressive, but I wanted to try something new in a similar style. There are Helloween-type songs on the Masterplan album, but if you listen to 'Bleeding Eyes' you hear our Rainbow and Zeppelin influences mixed with more modern down-tuned elements. I think that gives Masterplan an identity of its own."

Even so, Grapow and Kusch weren't shy about using a leftover from *The Dark Ride* for Masterplan, a Led Zeppelin-on-metal-flavoured track called 'Into The Light'.

"That's the only song left over from *The Dark Ride*," Grapow reveals. "Everything except the vocals had been recorded by the band, but Andi never

sang on it. The pilot vocals for the song were originally done by Metalium singer Henne Basse and he sang it so beautifully that I don't think Andi wanted to even try to match him (laughs)."

What truly sets Masterplan apart from Helloween is singer Jorn Lande. Considered one of the best metal vocalists around by many, the man's schizophrenic voice propels Masterplan into the stratosphere from the very first breath.

"Jorn helped push every song to the next level so that even the songs that sound like Helloween are different," says Grapow. "He's like a chameleon with his vocals; he sings a little differently on every song. You can compare him to Dio or David Coverdale, but in the end he sounds very unique. It's pretty unbelievable listening to him sometimes, because he knows instinctively what the songs need and gives them that extra little bit."

"Uli and I wrote all the music for the album but Jorn wrote more than half of the vocal melodies," Grapow continues. "We gave him all the material without any vocal melodies and the stuff he came up with was just brilliant. I'm not used to a singer that can change the melody of a song so drastically and in a good way. He took some good songs and made them so much better."

Grapow reveals that former Helloween singer Michael Kiske was asked to join Masterplan when it became clear that Russell Allen couldn't devote his full attention to the band. Kiske ended up turning down the offer, but he does appear alongside Lande on one song.

"We asked Michael Kiske to join us but he's not really into heavy metal anymore. We tried to convince him to get back out there with us and do some metal again, but he stands 100% behind his new project and isn't interested in doing music or touring strictly for the money. In any case, I asked him to sing one song with Jorn, and I think it's a really nice statement that we're friends again. The song itself, 'Heroes', is a song that I wrote specifically for Michael Kiske's voice, so it's got that classic Helloween feel."

By the time this sees print, Masterplan will be deep into a six week European tour with HammerFall, a fortuitous first step, likely to be followed with appearances at Wacken and the Bang Your Head Festival later in 2003 (though nothing has been confirmed yet). Grapow is itching to get out on the road, and he says that even though Masterplan is the focus there will be some definite nods to the past during the live set.

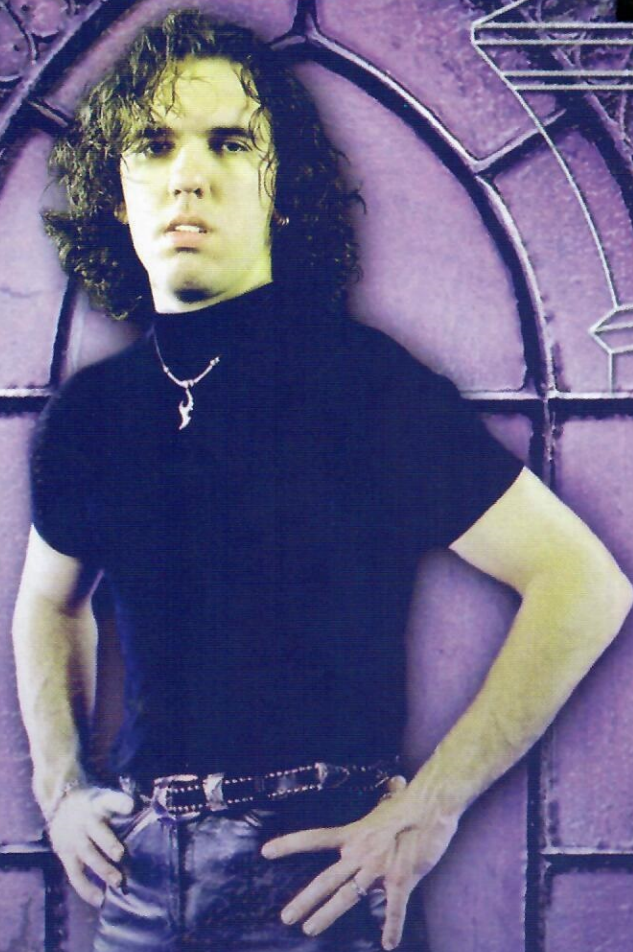
"We have to play some of the old stuff," Grapow agrees. "When we do headlining shows I'd like to do a minimum of two Helloween songs; at least one of Uli's and one of mine. Since we only have a 45 minute set on the HammerFall tour, we're going to do a medley, with parts of 'The Chance', 'Mr. Torture', 'The Departed', and one of Jorn's songs. We're going to film and record some of the shows, so who knows? Maybe we can release a live EP or something later in the year."

First point goes to Masterplan, but with Helloween brewing up a storm set for April, 2003 promises to be a very interesting year, with the fans coming out the winners. ☼

RETURN TO GREATNESS!

by Carl Begai

KAMELOT



Kamelot's fourth album, appropriately titled *The Fourth*

Legacy, was their breakthrough release, an album that elevated them from being Just Another Good Metal Band to Excuse Us While We Kick Your Ass status. In all seriousness, though, *The Fourth Legacy* was an album that set a very important standard for the members of Kamelot.

They had managed to exorcise the demons of mediocrity that had infected their first three albums in one fell swoop, they had garnered the full attention of metal fans on an international scale, and they had raised the bar for the albums that would follow. After a live album to commemorate the triumph that was *The Fourth Legacy* on the road, Kamelot returned with *Karma*, an album that did fairly well but did not have the same impact as its predecessor. Questions were raised as to whether Kamelot's well of creativity had started to run dry; basically, had they blown their wad on one album? Then came *Epica*, their latest and possibly their greatest effort to date.

All a matter of taste, of course, but the new one does have more in common with *The Fourth Legacy* than *Karma* even though it isn't nearly as guitar-oriented, as Mark Gromen pointed out in his focus. The focus, it seems, was on creating a new, more symphonic soundscape without straying into the realms of cheese occupied by *Rhapsody* or for that matter, diluting the metal aspects of the band.

"The idea this time was to pack in as much infor-

mation as possible," says singer Roy Khan. "That wasn't the main goal, but for sure this album was going to have a lot going on; little pieces connecting the songs, short instrumental bits, everything we could think of to make it stronger."

Roy understands the outside perception that *The Fourth Legacy* acts as the Kamelot benchmark for greatness, but he and the other members of the band feel differently about it.

"We don't look at that album as a standard we have to meet," he says bluntly. "Not really. We always try to develop ourselves as songwriters and musicians, and I guess we're one of the few bands that puts a lot of the money they make back into the production in order to make it as good as possible. We do that for ourselves, for our reputation. And, I want to hold this CD in my hands when I'm 60 or hopefully 80 years old and say 'Wow, we did a great job with this one; those days were cool.'"

Compared to *Karma*, Roy sees *Epica* as a much better, much stronger album.

"It's a totally different approach, and of course

we're going to say that the most recent thing we've done is the best (laughs). So, the reactions we're getting right now line up with how we feel about *Epica* ourselves. Considering how we did approach *Epica*, I would hope that the results would be different from what we've done in the past. I don't know if we necessarily tried to reinvent ourselves on *Epica*, but we at least tried to find new elements to work with. That has always been a thing with us from *The Fourth Legacy* that has carried on, and doing a concept album this time made the approach totally different."

"We had the outline of a story before we wrote the music, so we had to try and create atmospheres, come up with pieces of music that represented specific feelings, which was slightly different from earlier productions," Roy continues. "The story is based loosely on *Faust*, which is an extremely complex work. It's impossible to put that book and everything that is behind the text itself into a 50 or 60 minute CD. So, the main themes that we wrote about aren't that different from things we've written about in the past. The whole idea behind *Faust* just totally line up with how me and Thomas (Youngblood/guitars) live our lives and the

way we think. It just seemed like a very natural thing for us to build an album around it."

Given that Kamelot was trying to convey definite feelings over the course of *Epica*, Roy admits that it was easily one of the most demanding and ambitious musical projects he and Youngblood have ever undertaken.

"It was definitely the most difficult album to make so far. Songwriting comes very easily to me and Thomas as a songwriting team, but the connection between the concept and the music had to be there, so we always had to try and think ahead of the song that we were working on. It was definitely an approach that made things... interesting (laughs). It was very complicated but it was fun to do, all the way to the end."

It's easy to imagine that some of the complications that arose had to do with the symphonic elements of the songs. Kamelot has dabbled with strings and choir vocals in the past, but these aspects of the music are a major ingredient on *Epica*. As Roy has said, it was Kamelot's aim to pack as much information as they could on the album.

"I don't know if those elements have become a part

of our identity," Roy says, dwelling on the suggestion. "It was very natural to bring in a female vocalist on this production, and it has worked bringing one onto the live stage from a theatrical point of view. I guess people can expect something new from us every time, somehow, but we've never sat down and decided that we're going to focus solely on one direction and follow that road forever. Who knows? Following *Epica Part II* we might go and do an album that is just vocals, guitars, bass and drums."

Epica Part II? You mean to say that Kamelot hasn't sworn off of doing another concept album as most bands who try it often do?

"We're actually working on the next 'clean' studio album, I guess you could call it, and *Epica Part II*," Roy reveals. "We're not sure at this point if we want to do *Epica II* or just a regular studio album next, but I think it would be more natural to do a second part of this *Epica* concept first. This album is based only on the first part of *Faust*, so you see where we're going with this. Maybe we're being a little bit pretentious in our goals in some people's eyes, but I'm pretty sure we can pull it off." ☼

Devin Townsend.

A forward-thinking madman. A prolific figure ahead of his time. A man who walks the fine line between irony and realism, reveling in the thought of dismantling your expectations. A musician who embodies the spirit and electricity of the West Coast, seemingly laid-back and innocuous until, of course, he scares the living shit out of you with a little project he likes to call Strapping Young Lad. All of these descriptions of Devin are correct, but each represents only one facet of an incredibly diverse musical palette. Devin Townsend is a musician's musician, shape-shifting his sound on a regular basis and experimenting with things for the purest of reasons: because it might lead to something cool.



Pics by Daniel J. Collins

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD

by David Perri

Mired In Self-Reflection...

Townsend's latest venture is Strapping Young Lad's new record, simply titled Strapping Young Lad. When BW&BK last spoke to Devin in 2001, Strapping was a done deal and the Vancouver-based musician had unequivocally stated that no new album bearing that moniker would ever again see the light of day. Evidently, the plan changed.

"Emotionally I guess everybody's a little unpredictable, and I just tend to demonstrate it," begins an eminently friendly Townsend. "I had [another Strapping album] in me, so I did it. Also, it was important that if this was going to be the swansong for Strapping that we had to close it with the guys I had spent so much time with. This album allows me to go forth with other projects without the guilt of leaving Jed, Gene and Byron hanging. In terms of songwriting, I worked the way I usually do. I focus on themes for each project that I become enamored with. The theme that inspired this new record is September 11, not directly in any sense, but about what we're feeling right now. Y'know, fear and anger and anticipation and bravado."

Townsend's words bear all the hallmarks that indicate we're seeing 2003's first full-blown concept album. However, he is quick to dispel the notion that SYL has any storyline or specific connection to the terrorist event. "No, it's not a concept album. In fact, there's no concept to anything I do. SYL is simply a theme; I guess you could call it a theme record. It's not Operation: Mindcrime. It's more along the lines of analyzing what's going on in the world right now, and adding my perception of those events in the over-all analysis."

One of the main criticisms that Strapping Young Lad has faced is that amongst the over-the-top heaviness of it all, things sound similar from album to album. Even the desensitized metal public has had difficulty with differentiation when it has come to Devin's metallic project. Given this notion, one imagines it was important for SYL not to sound similar to City of Devils, much to my surprise, disagrees.

"It wasn't important at all for this new one to be different in any respect, because the whole thing with Strapping is just being as heavy as you can be. In terms of the sound itself, whatever is going on at that time in my life - or in the time of our life as a band - then that's what Strapping will be. Whether it sounds more minor in the way it's written, or whether it's going to sound more musical to a certain extent while still being really heavy, there's certain elements of Strapping that we as a band took a long time to analyze, and isolate. We figured out that some things worked contingent on

other things, and not just by fluke. I got hung up for a little while on The Joshua Tree and Born In The USA and Thriller and Marshall Mathers and all those records that are just hysteria. Those are the records that epitomize the artist before they go fuckin' do tons of drugs and freak out. So, it was kind of like, 'What makes Strapping work?' I analyzed that question and I figured out it was this, this, this and this. Knowing that, I figured let's just make it bigger and more. And make it kind of cathartic. People are very afraid and people are very angry right now, so here's a record to listen to in that headspace."

The seemingly inside-joke between Townsend and his fans is that Strapping Young Lad isn't really meant to be taken seriously. With record titles like Heavy As A Really Heavy Thing and No Sleep 'Till Bedtime, one assumes some measure of humour inside the Strapping catalogue. However, Townsend makes it clear that his work stretches far beyond the laughable, and into the realm of the ironic.

"The whole thing, all of Strapping Young Lad, is meant to be ironic. Nothing should be taken at face-value. You thought we were a metal band, like Judas Priest? (laughs). Irony was kind of the point with these records and I think it's obvious on a lot of levels. Strapping doesn't push the envelope like Terria did, but after Terria I was bored of doing that. I went out of my way to make stream of consciousness music with that album. The process was fun, but you do too much of that and you just drift off into obscurity. And my ego didn't want that to happen (laughs). I wanted to get back into a different mind-frame. You've all been bugging me for another City, so here's an updated version. And now I'll go out and do something different."

Just what exactly Devin will do next is metal's not so best kept secret. An excited tone comes forth as he begins to discuss future plans. "I've got the Devin Townsend Band going on and that album is recorded. The new record is called Accelerated Evolution. It's the total opposite of Strapping; it's not metal. I think I epitomize both ends of the spectrum with Accelerated Evolution and SYL. With the Devin Townsend Band it's about relationships, getting older, marriage, kids... a life. Which doesn't require anger, really. It just requires diligence and patience and all that. The Devin Townsend Band is a really good representation of that process to me."

Commitment to one band is difficult enough for some, yet Devin seems fully immersed in two major bands at the current moment. With so much activity going on, is touring to support SYL even a possibility right now? "I'm going to be on the road until 2006 (laughs). We're hoping to do a Canadian tour, but it really depends. The climate of support is starting to change, but it's still kind of weird for us in Canada. A lot of times the support really hasn't been there like it has been in all these other places. It bums you out some times. It's great that there's Brave Words and George on Much Music. These people take notice of what's going on in Canada and what makes us culturally significant put to extreme music. But, at the same time, there's this overwhelming resentment towards it, too. Maybe it's just Vancouver. But, touring as a whole is so up in the air right now. There's so many tours we've been offered with Strapping and with the Devin Townsend Band. We've only played two shows with the Devin Townsend Band and I've got to get that going if I want it to be where I want it

to be. And as for Strapping, to take advantage of the hype that's going on we've got to commit to a bunch of opening gigs and extensive headlining ones."

Despite the less-than-stellar reception Canada has given one of its own, Townsend continues to wave the flag. 2001's Terria saw a track titled simply 'Canada', a song that reflects the natural splendour of the prairie provinces. Therefore, given this blatant reference to his country of birth, one wonders whether Townsend's music is meant to be patriotic, or whether it transgresses nationalistic boundaries.

"Well, 'Canada' is definitely Canadian. But we've toured so many places now, and I've had so many cool experiences with so many cool people that the only basis of my Canadian experience at this juncture is my home life. Terria was really influenced by Canada because I had just toured with The Smalls. And it was summer, and I was just coming out of a really bad era and it was sunny and low-key and it was awesome. At the same time, Korea fucked my head up, and Australia was cool, too. We've been to all these neat places where we've had a chance to meet different people and have all these unique experiences. So, I guess I'm proud to say that the music represents my own experiences, regardless of country of origin."

With all this introspection and region-based songwriting, Devin's music sounds decidedly... intellectual. "Well, I wouldn't say that," he laughs. "It depends on what you define as intellectual. My music can be considered intellectual, or it can be considered just something by somebody who has a slightly above average intelligence who really pushes himself and looks really pretentious while doing it (laughs). I don't know... honestly, I'm as confused as you are about it. I just like recording music, having cool ideas and playing my guitar."

One day, though, Townsend will probably hang up the guitar and install himself behind the much less glamorous mixing board full-time. "I just produced the Lamb Of God record," he explains. "It was really good, but it was really difficult. I really like the Lamb Of God guys and it was really cool to become friends with them, but I'm investing so, so much energy into something that... well, I just view production as something I can do on the sideline until I get older, and then when I'm older do it exclusively. Soilwork was fun too, but a lot of that has to do with Fredrik (Norstrom). Fredrik's fuckin' amazing. I definitely did my thing and there's my stamps all over it, but Soilwork knew what they wanted to do from the minute they got into the studio. I just made small changes. They're smart people, and they deserve all the success they have and more. If anything, I just helped them clarify the extremity they were after. I just got an offer to do Kristian's new record in Brazil, and then bring it back home to Vancouver to mix it. There's a certain part of me that wants the experience of living in a new place and doing death or black metal, which is so different from my belief system. That challenge is really intriguing."

Intriguing is probably the best word to sum up Strapping Young Lad and the mind of its principle creator. "You use that word because I'm a freak, right?" Townsend laughs. "I've always been like this. Y'know, people always want to hang out and talk, but no one ever phones ya (laughs). And that's cool."

Given how cool Devin really is, the rest of us won't truly be able to appreciate what he's doing until we all catch up with his headspace. ☺

OSI

by Clay Marshall

progressing beyond prog!

Jim Matheos says he hates the term "supergroup," but does any other term accurately convey the significance of OSI? After all, during any discussion about American progressive metal, two names invariably reverberate loudest: Dream Theater and Fates Warning. The thought of a marriage between the two - or even just the musical equivalent of a one-night stand - would have any prog fan salivating. Sweeten the deal by including Kevin Moore, the former DT keyboardist who performed on Fates' last two records, and sit back and watch the internet message boards light up.

But something funny happened along the way: The prog all-stars threw us a curveball. Sure, OSI's Office Of Strategic Influence contains plenty of progressive elements - odd time signatures (25/16!), cerebral lyrics, unbridled musicianship and a ten minute song, for starters - and at various points, the album does indeed recall Dream Theater, Fates Warning and/or Moore's Chroma Key project... but only momentarily.

In the end, rather than give fans what they'd expect, Matheos, Moore and Mike Portnoy crafted a compelling and challenging art rock enigma that defies categorization. It favours mood and atmosphere over masturbatory solos and owes less to prog than to Pink Floyd, but the layers uncovered by repeated listens prove that OSI is anything but minimalist. The bottom line is that you could drive yourself crazy trying to pigeonhole the record, but if you have to label it something, call it the first great album of 2003.

Guitarist Matheos says the genesis of OSI was almost accidental. After Fates finished an American tour with Savatage in May of 2001, he began writing what he assumed would be the group's tenth album. But vocalist Ray Alder was busy with his Engine side project, while drummer Mark Zonder soon became immersed in plans to resurrect Warlord.

"I didn't really want to sit around waiting, so I figured I might as well do something different with my downtime," says Matheos, whose only work outside of Fates Warning at the time comprised two acoustic instrumental recordings. "The first thing I thought was to do a project with Mike, because he and I have been friends for 20 years now, and we've probably talked about doing a project together for 15 of those. He had some downtime coming up, so he was up for it."

Because he planned to use much of the material written with Fates Warning in mind - and also because of the pedigree he shared with Portnoy - Matheos initially planned to take the project in a traditional progressive metal direction. Accordingly, the two subsequently contacted Gordian Knot bassist Sean Malone and Pain of Salvation vocalist Daniel Gildenlow, both of whom fit the prerequisite prog supergroup criteria. But after Matheos and Portnoy decided they wanted to include keyboardist Moore - who left Dream Theater after 1994's *Awake* and now lives in Costa Rica - all bets were off.

"When Kev came into the picture, he heard the music in

a different way," Matheos explains. "I sent him some of the material, and he surprised me with what he did to it. I'd never been in a situation where I'd written a piece of music and given it to someone else, and then gotten it back completely turned upside down. But I was really into the direction he was taking it, and that's where it took the left turn from prog metal into whatever you would call it now. There are still prog elements in there, but I think it's been de-progged to a certain extent."

After hearing Moore's contributions, Matheos says he and Portnoy faced a difficult decision - one that eventually defines all side projects. "We thought it was going to be just another progressive project with all of us playing on it, which would have been a lot of fun. But the debate was, do we do that, or do we take this and do something really different, something that's not really been done yet? It was much more exciting to all of us to go in a different direction."

Moore also added vocals to the songs he sent back to Matheos, which led to OSI's second formative decision. "They totally blew me away, so we said, 'OK, maybe we'll do half the record with Daniel singing and half the record with Kevin.' But the more I thought about it and the more material I got from Kevin, I knew it was going to be a compromise to do half and half. Mike realized it too - 'Let's just do something completely and go with it.'"

Moore's laid-back, restrained, midrange vocals are perhaps OSI's biggest surprise, if only because our ears have been trained to expect a powerhouse vocalist in the vein of Tate, LaBrie or Alder. "I like the way Kevin sings, and I like the way he puts effects on his vocals," Matheos says. "The last thing we wanted when we decided to go in a different direction was just another metal screamer." (Porcupine Tree's Steven Wilson, another singer Matheos admired, provides guest vocals on the track 'ShutDOWN').

Although he was OSI's architect, Matheos quickly realized that the group would be a true collaboration. "When it started off, it was more or less going to be a solo project, for lack of a better term," he says. "It slowly changed, and by the end, it definitely became a group effort with everyone working together. I think for all three of us, it took a little getting used to, being that we're all kind of in charge of our own gigs. But in the studio here, there was a bit of compromise that we all weren't used to."

For Matheos - who's written the vast majority of Fates Warning's catalog - that meant yielding lyrics to Moore. "We said from day one, 'If he's going to sing, then he's going to write the lyrics.' Not to sound too much like a fan, but Kevin is probably my favourite lyricist out there, and when he offered to write, I knew I would definitely take a backseat to that."

Matheos also let Moore run with the ball as far as OSI's name, which refers to the now-defunct Pentagon department designed to spread false information - so-called "black propaganda" - to foreign media, with the goal of swaying public opinion abroad. "The name and concept were basically Kevin's, and once he explained it to us, we decided it was a cool concept. I

don't think we're really trying to get anything huge across politically; it was just a cool concept, and the packaging has this whole top secret/passport look."

As for Moore's reunion with Portnoy, Matheos downplays his role as a mediator. "I don't know how much they had talked in the interim, and I don't know when they had seen each other last," he says. "But it was cool - they had some talks and had fun together."

Malone, meanwhile, contributed his bass tracks from across the country. "He did his stuff at his studio in Portland, (Ore.), and then snail-mailed it back to me," Matheos says. "We have the same kind of hard disk recording system, so I sent him the files and he would occasionally send me MP3s over the net. He's an incredible bass player and writer, and I was kind of bummed that he didn't really get a chance to put his stamp on it more as far as the writing went. Maybe next time around."

Next time? Pray, do tell. "There's no solid plans. Unfortunately, Mike is so busy, and Kevin's a little inaccessible, living in Costa Rica. But we always say, 'In the future, maybe we'll do something when all the schedules coincide again.' It might be fun."



goodies from the office...

A limited-edition, specially packaged pressing of OSI's Office Of Strategic Influence will contain a three-track bonus CD featuring covers of Pink Floyd's 'Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun'

and Neil Young's 'New Mama' as well as what Jim Matheos says was the catalyst for OSI, a 17-minute original track titled 'The Thing That Never Was'.

"I originally wanted to call OSI 'Looks Like Rain,'" he explains. "The first piece was a 20, 25 minute piece of music - it was a prog project, after all - but what eventually happened was that elements from that song were taken and carved into the individual songs that are now on OSI. What you have on the bonus disc is like a 17-minute version of the original song in its demo form, with just me and Mike playing. It's kind of interesting, because people can see the evolution - you can see what it was at first and what it became."

The bonus disc also includes 19 minutes of multimedia footage, including a conceptual video for the song 'Horseshoes and B-52's' edited and directed by Moore. "In other words, it doesn't show the band playing live," Matheos says. "It's not like a huge concept/theme we're trying to get across; it's just more of a visual piece." In addition, there is a brief behind-the-scenes documentary - "just studio footage when Mike was recording the drums, but when all of us were there bouncing ideas off of each other," Matheos says. ☺

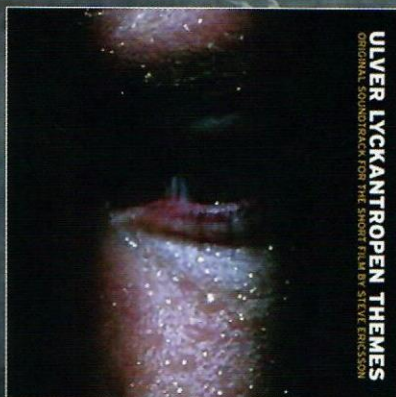
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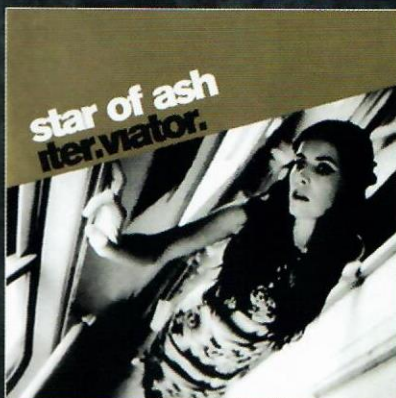
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It was natural to be skeptical about Grave's comeback. I mean look at what Unleashed delivered, and when Grave announced that their return was going to be in the soulless/old-school Grave vein, one could cynically call that utterance a cliché, something designed so that people wouldn't write it off completely. But then again, who's to fool? Grave have always forged their niche within the Swedish death metal scene. Back in the day they were part of the Stockholm Big Four alongside Entombed, Dismember and, ahem, Unleashed, helping to shape what was to be the coveted Stockholm death metal sound of the early '90s.

By Chris Brunl

AND THE ANGELS WEEP!

And Back From The Grave is rewardingly crushing in every sense, combining heaving and powerful riffs with a Sunlight sound that has single-handedly resurrected the classic Grave. If the title to the new album is not an understatement, I don't know what is.

"We never proclaimed that the band was over," says guitarist/vocalist/founding member Ola Lindgren. "Nothing really happened during those years, up until about a couple of years ago when we started getting back together. We didn't go up to the label saying that the band were finished or anything like that. A lot of people have been asking if Century Media made us do a new album. But they didn't have anything to do with it really. We more or less contacted them, telling them that we were writing music again. We sent them a quick rehearsal tape of a couple of songs; they liked it and they wanted us to continue writing."

"It was more or less when me and Jensa (Paulsson/original drummer) did the Hating Life album," reflects Ola on making Grave a real band again. "We recorded it, just us two and had session people on tour. Jonas (Torndal), who played bass on the first Grave album, is in the band now playing second guitar and also about the same time we got Frederick (Isaksson) to play bass. So we had a full stable line-up again and that's pretty much what started to get everything going again. They had a lot of ideas also and we put everything together. I'm pretty used to writing most of the stuff myself, but it was interesting and fun to consider other people's input."

"Basically we've been quite different from the other Swedish bands since the beginning," Ola explains, articulating the Grave sound. "And I think most of it is because we didn't live in Stockholm when we started doing music. We lived on this small island outside of Stockholm; you had to get there by ferry and it usually took six hours. It was very isolated. In the summer time there were tons of tourists and after it's totally dead. So we had pretty much nothing else to do than write music. We met up in seventh grade and started doing music together. And then we moved up to Stockholm after we got signed, right before we recorded the first album. So I guess that's why we have a little bit of a different style."

With all the metal trends and musical advancements that have come and gone during Grave's career, it was quite refreshing that Grave stuck to their traditional sound.

"In the mid-'90s, when we did the Hating Life album... I mean it's hard to find a really good record that came out around '95/'96. For instance the Entombed releases during those years were pretty weird, but they found their way back again. I totally like their last album. But back then, the black metal scene was coming on pretty strong but that kind of died out really fast, except for the really good bands that are here today. But it was totally a trend. And then came the power metal trend over here. Oh man, that was the worst! But it's funny; you can just laugh at it. It's just fucking ridiculous. The melodic death metal has been pretty big. In Flames did really well. I liked the early In Flames album; it was their own style, but nowadays, I dunno, it's not

metal anymore. I mean they have heavy guitars, but whatever. P.O.D. have heavy guitars (laughs)."

Are you surprised at Meshuggah's popularity these days?

"Yeah, absolutely! And it's not easy listening music either. It's very technical, totally impossible to get into the songs if you haven't heard the album ten times before and you have no idea what's going on. That's pretty amazing that they have gotten so big with this kind of music. But it's cool; I've known a couple of the guys from way back in the day."

Hating Life was a bit of an odd departure. Comments?

"For what it was, I think it was alright. It was right after Jorgen (Sandstrom) left. He wasn't in on any of the songs on that album. Me and Jensa figured if we should stick with the band and keep going, should we get new people, get a new singer, and we basically decided to do the album and see what would happen. It's our weakest release; I can say that for sure. I still enjoy listening to it every now and then, but looking back on it today, I don't think it was a smart move from our point of view, fan-wise. But this new album now proves the total opposite." "Jorgen and I meet pretty often," Ola says concerning the ex-Grave/current day Entombed member. "Century Media really wanted him to come back. I don't know if we discussed it that much. Even if he would have done something on the album, he wouldn't have been able to tour. He maybe could have done a guest appearance on a couple of tracks, but we never really discussed it. I guess Century Media wanted a total reunion of the original band. But he's got so much to do with Entombed."

Since Century Media's recent explosive growth, did you ever have any "priority" worries?

"There were... not doubts, but we were wondering basically how much input they would have on this album," Ola replies. "And when we contacted them, in 2000 when we first started writing, they were totally on. But a lot of the new people there are younger than we are and a lot of them grew up listening to us, as fans. It's kind of weird but it's pretty cool. I mean when we started out it was pretty much us, Unleashed, Morgoth and Tiamat that the label first signed. So we kind of helped them to get everything going with the first album."

And the first three Grave albums are defined as Swedish death metal classics in their own right.

"It's very cool. For live appearances, we have been going through our early albums. We always had these songs that we always played live from these albums; you know the songs everyone wants to hear, like 'Soulless', 'Into The Grave', 'You'll Never See...'. So we pretty much went through the albums and I think it's pretty amazing. Still today, Into The Grave sounds like it could have been a new release. It sounds very old but still... it's hard to describe but it sounds very active in a way."

So what would you say is the classic Grave release, from the fans' point of view?

"A lot of them think it's either Soulless or Into The Grave. I think Into The Grave is the most successful sales-wise."

And I'm sure for some younger fans, Grave will almost seem like a new band.

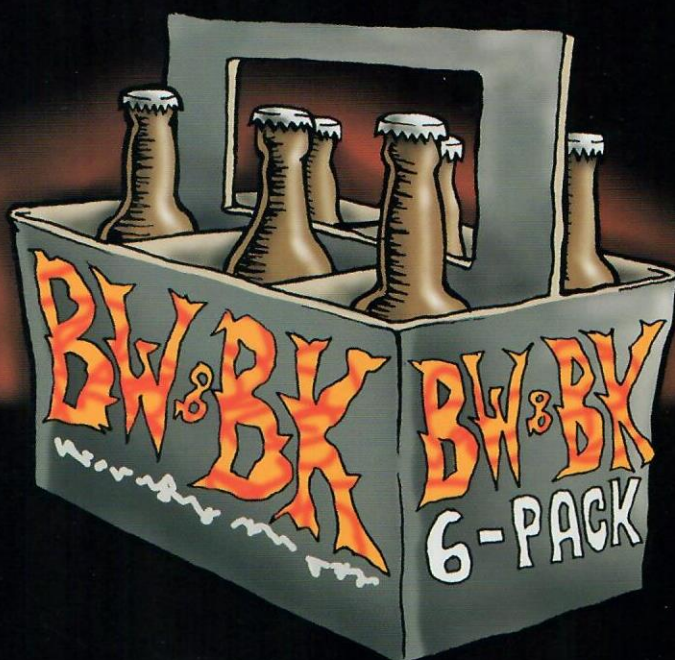
"We played a couple of gigs here in Sweden after the new album was out and there was a big mix in the crowd. There were a lot of the old school people, but there was also a newer generation. I got a kid brother who is 20, and because of him being related to me, he has been into the music since he was 12 because I forced him to (laughs). But his friends really got into death metal in the last couple of years, which you see also when you play live, that there's a lot of young people as well."

Do you think it will be hard to break into this new market?

"I don't think so because it seems like there are totally different people who listen to In Flames or the Gothenburg style. I don't think they listen to ordinary death metal. I don't think they mix it; it's a totally old style. Like the ones into Grave, Entombed or Dismember, they'll basically stick with this because it's a totally different thing." ☺



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Victory, for all its various cultural manifestations, is a singular notion. No matter where you travel to on this planet, the objective idea of winning is at its core, what every one strives for. In honour of such an esteemed concept, Amon Amarth has affectionately titled its latest slab of circular plastic *Versus The World*. Based on Norse mythology, *Versus The World* is a record that simultaneously embraces old-school Amon Amarth melody, while also slowing down the attack to create thickened levels of heaviness. It's a change that was both pre-conceived and necessary: Amon Amarth has undoubtedly re-routed to remain.

Amon Amarth

takes on the world!

by David Perri



"*Versus The World* is a little bit different from our previous material," comments baritone vocalist Johan Hegg. "The songs are more epic and, in that vein, a little slower. There's more melody and harmony, but we didn't want to compromise the brutality. So, we had to slow down a bit."

But that doesn't necessarily mean that current fans will be put off by the change. In fact, all the Viking metal tendencies of previous Amon work find themselves squarely on the new album. Or do they? "I don't object to the term 'Viking metal' because there's some truth to it. We do have lyrics about Vikings. But, to me, Viking metal is bands like *Enslaved* or *Bathory*. I think we're totally a death metal band."

Viking talk continues, as Hegg explains the reason for the new album's lyrics being based solely on the Norse conception of the end of the world. "Because the lyrics deal with such a bleak subject, there needed to be more of a melancholic feel to the music. The lyrics are about legends we're familiar with in the band. Actually, my sister even contributed on 'Thousand Years Of Oppression'. She wrote the lyrics to that after I sent her a story of mine via email. She thought the story was interesting, so she gave her interpretation of the tale and that ended up being on the record. Also, the title of the album reflects the ten year anniversary of the band. We've had to fight against the world to get where we are, and we've had to take a lot of shit. Sometimes you feel down when it seems like everything is working against you, so we thought we'd name the album after the struggles we've faced."

When a single theme or constant is apparent throughout a band's career, you've gotta ask where the fascination comes from. Hegg was probed for the origin of this Viking interest. "I've been interested in this sort of thing since I was young. When we read about the Vikings in school, I just

became very enamoured of it. I'm not really interested in knowing every little detail about the Vikings; it's the philosophy behind the way they lived that I enjoy reading about. In a way, we're Vikings in the band. We travel across the globe and do battle on stage (laughs). I don't dress up in armour or wield a sword in my private life, but we live the Viking lifestyle on the road. And we drink lots of beer (laughs). But it's very much the spirit and philosophy of that time period that interests me."

The perennial question when it comes to Amon Amarth is whether or not all those tales of Scandinavian spirits and wars on the band's records are really allegories for racism. Hegg sighs in exasperation before answering the question. "It's sad that people think we're racists. We're not. It's something we have to live with, because this idea doesn't seem to go away. In Sweden, Vikings usually are viewed as racist imagery. But when we write about them, we're just dealing with Scandinavian history. It's not a white power issue. I mean, we've had three drummers. Two of them have been immigrants. One was half Indian, and the other was South American. If we were racists, would they have been in the band? We write about how the Vikings lived. Christianity came to Scandinavia and has oppressed the natural way of life of this region for the last 1000 years. That's what the songs are about, and somehow they get misrepresented."

Veering away from politics and getting back to music, the question as to whether Abyss Studios closing has affected Amon Amarth was posed. *Versus The World* is the first Amon Amarth album in a while not to be recorded in Peter Tagtgren's home away from home. "We were a little bit nervous, changing studios. Abyss is known for its great sound. With a new studio, everything can go wrong. Like our first full-

length at Sunlight Studios, there were fuck-ups everywhere (laughs). In this case, we had to choose a new studio because Peter doesn't have time to produce anymore. So, the new record naturally sounds different because it was recorded in a new place. Berno from Berno Studios didn't want to hear any of our previous albums, because he wanted this one to have its own identity. He wanted to start fresh, and I think he gave it a clean, crisp sound."

A North American tour doesn't seem to be in the works yet, but those on the other side of the pond will definitely be getting live Amon Amarth action in the coming months. "We're touring Scandinavia in March, but no dates are set yet. We're going to do Europe in April and there will definitely be some German shows."

Speaking of Germany, Hegg is eager to discuss last summer's Amon Amarth performance at Germany's metallic pilgrimage, namely the Wacken Festival. "Wacken was unbelievably cool! (laughs). It was a kick ass show! We were surprised with the reception, really. We knew we had German fans, but there were 12,000 people watching us at 12:30 in the afternoon. I know from my own experience at festivals that everyone is usually hung-over at that time, so it was really cool to see that many people watching us."

So, what does the future hold for Amon Amarth? It seems not even Hegg is certain. "We're going to take it one album at a time. The new stuff we're writing is in the same vein as *Versus The World*, but you never know. When we release the next album, it might be completely different. It could be more brutal, it could even be more epic. Actually, I'd like to do another purely brutal album. It's important to change things up and never stay in the same place!"

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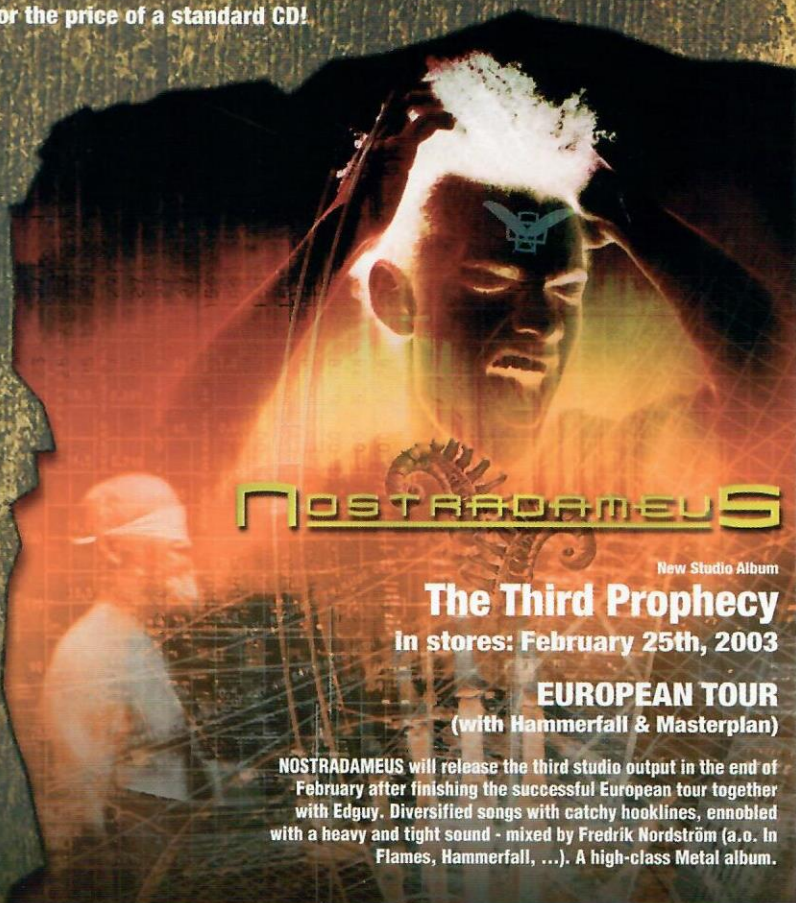
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With the exception of an occasional one-off gig and solo albums from guitarist Timo Tolkki and singer Timo Kotipelto, 2002 was a quiet year for Stratovarius. Putting an album out every 12 to 15 months followed by international tours was a cycle that began in earnest with the release of the *Episode* album in 1995, a cycle that began to take a serious toll on the members of the band both personally and creatively during the *Infinite* album's run in 2000.

Following the tour, which ended in late 2001, Tolkki decided to put the band on ice for a year in order to recharge the creative batteries and come storming back with an album that featured an invigorated and exciting Stratovarius. There will be some argument amongst fans as to whether or not the new album, *Elements Pt. 1*, is the best thing Stratovarius has ever put to tape, but there's no question that a new facet has been added to the band's trademark sound.

Elements Pt. 1 features a Stratovarius that has gone in a more progressive direction compared to their last couple albums, surprisingly reminiscent of their *Dreamspace* opus from 1993, before Kotipelto came on board. There is also a prominent symphonic ingredient in the mid-tempo songs, three of which clock in at over eight minutes in length. These are two unexpected but welcome developments for those fans that were getting bored of the usual pedal-through-the-floorboards approach. Kotipelto agrees with the suggestion that Stratovarius was showing signs of stagnating and that it was

necessary to shake things up a bit.

"I think we did begin to get a little too predictable," Kotipelto concedes. "Maybe even a little bit bored of ourselves. We tried to do some different things on previous albums but I don't know if we were very successful. On the new album we succeeded in bringing some new elements into the music, but without forgetting our past or changing our style. Of course there are people that will say we're just repeating ourselves, but anyone that says this album is totally the same compared to what we've done in the past, I don't respect their opinion at all. Some fans might feel that we've changed too much on *Elements* but this is a natural thing for us, and we had to do something new."

"I don't think we made any conscious decision to go in this new direction," Kotipelto continues. "I think it just happened because of the break we had. Lots of people have said that we didn't really take a break because of the solo albums, but that's not the case. We took a step away from Stratovarius

for a while, especially Timo. He wrote all the songs on *Elements*, and I think our sound changed because Timo had the chance to compose totally different material when he did his solo album, so that's where his mind was. I have to admit, I was surprised as you are when I heard songs like 'Elements' and 'Soul Of A Vagabond' for the first time, but it was a nice surprise."

"It's funny and weird, though," Kotipelto adds, delving into Tolkki's mindset. "When Timo composes he comes up with the title of the song first, then he starts composing the music and lyrics. I always ask him, 'Where the fuck is your logic?' (laughs). It's strange, but that's the way he works and it's a method that works well."

Determined to make *Elements Pt. 1* as big and bombastic as possible, Stratovarius, or rather Tolkki, opted to use a real symphonic orchestra for the classical elements in songs like the title track, 'Fantasia' and the ballad 'Papillon'.

"All the symphonies on the album are real except for the intro to 'Find Your Own Voice', which was composed by (keyboardist) Jens Johansson," Kotipelto reveals. "We actually used the whole symphony orchestra from a city in Finland called Joensuu which, to be honest, cost a lot of money because it took a lot of their time. So we'd better sell some copies (laughs). Timo wanted to have the best sound possible which is why we didn't use any samples. What amazed me

Pic by Mare Villalunga

STRATOVARIUS

Flying High Again!

by Carl Begai

the first time I heard the orchestra were the arrangements, because they are very progressive. So, we had very progressive sounding songs without the orchestra, and the two guys that did the arrangements for the orchestra made the songs even more interesting."

As the title of the album suggests, there will be an *Elements Pt. 2* in the future, likely continuing in the same progressive neo-symphonic direction. Kotipelto reveals that the proposed album has in fact almost been completed, with a release date targeted for January 2004.

"We worked really hard this time because we recorded two albums at the same time. The vocals and guitar solos aren't ready for Part 2, but other than that it's completely done. Timo is going to do the solos some time this year any I'm going to do the vocals in January, very close to the release. We rehearsed for one-and-a-half months for these two albums, and we've never rehearsed that long for any album. Usually it's two weeks at the most, and I think for the *Destiny* album it was two days (laughs). We did a lot of the arrangements during the rehearsals, and even though all of

the songs are composed by Timo, I think there was a lot more input from each member of the band than on previous albums."

Why not put out a double CD instead of a single one if the material is available? The band has been around long enough and has a large enough following to justify such a move...

"I don't think so," Kotipelto disagrees. "I don't think it would have been a good idea for Stratovarius. We're still too small. It made more sense to record two albums together and put them out a year apart, especially since we want to play as much new material as we can live. We wouldn't be able to do that with a double album."

Which raises the question as to whether or not Stratovarius is going to be able to bring the songs from *Elements Pt. 1* to the stage without a loss of intensity. They are indeed a band built for the stage, but the new material sounds like it might be too much, even for them.

"These songs will probably be the most complicated songs we've ever played," Kotipelto agrees. "Especially

because of the orchestra. We've used mini-disc on previous tours, but the problem with that is having to follow a click-track. Thankfully, Jorg (Michael) is a really tight drummer, so if he follows the click and we follow him it might work. It will be a lot of work to rehearse the songs but I think it will be okay. Unfortunately, we're not a big band like Metallica so we can't bring the orchestra on stage with us, but then again, I don't think the fans would expect or even want something like that."

Point taken, but back up a second. Perhaps Stratovarius isn't as big as Metallica on a financial scale, but in terms of popularity? There is a definite downturn in interest in the firm of Hetfield, Ulrich & Partners, while Stratovarius keeps growing.

"I don't know about that," says Kotipelto. "We have quite a good following in some countries - I can't deny that - but Metallica are superstars while we're a mid-level band... for now, anyway (laughs). If people are going to put us in the same boat with Metallica, though, I'm sure as hell not going to complain." ☺



MICHAEL KISKE

by Carl Begai

points of no return

WHICH IS WORSE: the metal icon who pursues a new musical direction that flies in the face of everything that made him famous to begin with, or the one that goes through the motions - strictly for the money - and cuts an album of material that the fans want to hear? put the question to former HELLOWEEN singer michael kiske and he'll vote for the former, having spent the last six years producing music - albeit sporadically - that the vast majority of metal fans simply cannot stomach. the man that became something close to a legend in the wake of HELLOWEEN's classic keeper of the seven keys albums decided to go in a more rock-oriented direction when he left HELLOWEEN in 1993, putting out two albums under his own name (instant clarity and readiness to sacrifice) that earned him nothing but contempt.

But surprisingly, Kiske hasn't crawled back into the metal scene with his tail between his legs. Instead, he has formed a band called Supared that offers up more of the same not-quite-metal fare, if a tad heavier than his two previous outings.

To understand the here and now of Kiske's world we have to look back to 1993, when he was fired from Helloween following the poorly received Chameleon album. It's a matter of public record that Kiske was and still is blamed by the band for the experimental, commercial sounding album even though he was only one of three people involved in the songwriting process. Kiske, on the other hand, says the split was due more to personal problems than creative ones, and that the band used his admitted loss of interest in metal as the primary reason for Chameleon's questionable direction.

"My main reason for leaving Helloween was a personal thing between one guy and me," says Kiske, choosing his words carefully. "The chemistry in the band was just dead; it was a nightmare. The situation was like a marriage, when you find someone and you're completely in tune with each other, but a few years go by and suddenly you can't talk to each other anymore. People change, and I was very frustrated and completely unsatisfied because of the vibe in the band, the way we treated each other. I wasn't brave enough to leave the band because I didn't want to blow it up. Helloween was a very important thing for me; I was just 18 when I joined them and Helloween made me someone. I wasn't brave enough to end it even though I wanted it to end, so I sort of gave them reasons to fire me."

"People always talk about my leaving Helloween as being a creative thing, but that's just not true," Kiske continues. "Even today the band likes to say that there were creative differences but it was not really the case. I mean, the softest song Helloween ever wrote was 'Windmill', and that was written by Michael Weikath. I didn't have a gun to his head. Everybody in Helloween did what they wanted to do; we wrote songs and made Helloween songs out of them. When they started blaming me for Helloween losing their metal direction on Chameleon I took it personally, because it was totally unfair."

Looking back, Kiske has no regrets about leaving Helloween - or rather, getting the voluntary boot - even though his post-Helloween career up to this point has been less than impressive.

"The thing with me is, I've never been the kind of musician that plans out where a record should go; I don't function

like that. I can't sit down and write a song in a specific direction. Whatever excites me is what dictates where the music is going to go. It was that way even when I was in Helloween; my songs were always different compared to what Weiki and Roland (Grapow/guitars) wrote, but it was a good balance. Now that I'm on my own, things are a little more extreme in a way. I don't make it very easy for myself in terms of selling records and it becomes a pain in the ass sometimes, but it's just the way I work."

Kiske admits that he has indeed turned his back on metal, that it simply doesn't excite him anymore. A bitter pill for some old school Helloween fans to swallow...

"I did metal because I liked it, and I don't regret anything I did in the past," says Kiske. "I stand behind it fully and I wouldn't have done it any other way, but I'm a completely different person now. My heart has turned away from the scene. I'm much more interested in artists like U2 or Pink because, for me, there's more going on in the rock/pop world than in the metal world."

Be that as it may, Kiske has left one metal door open. He makes a brief appearance on Masterplan's debut album, formed by more recent ex-Helloween members Roland Grapow and Uli Kusch. Kiske was, in fact, asked to join Masterplan at one point but turned the offer down.

"It's the same situation that I have with (ex-Helloween/Gamma Ray guitarist) Kai Hansen. My singing on the Masterplan album is a salute to the world to say that we're friends again. Since Roland got out of Helloween we've talked and everything is clear between us; there's no bad blood. I would have liked to have joined the band but that just isn't me anymore. My decision to go in a more rock direction... it's never been about betraying the fans; it's been about not betraying myself. But, I'm very flattered that Roland asked me to join and I wish them all the success in the world."

The press reaction to Kiske's new outfit, Supared, has been positive, but he's the first one to agree that this doesn't really mean anything in the long run. Ultimately, it will be the

fans that pass final judgment. No question, though, the Supared debut is better than both Kiske's solo outings.

"I think there are some heavy songs on the Supared album, maybe even a little bit too heavy for my nerves," Kiske offers. "To me, making something sound heavy metal, that's just on the surface. I don't care what kind of a costume the song comes in as long as it's a good track. Some of the tracks on the album turned out to be a little harder than my solo albums, but that wasn't my goal. I was more concerned about having a common thread running through the whole album, which is something my solo albums lacked."

No matter how well (or poorly) Supared fares, Kiske will always be known first and foremost as THE voice of Helloween. Asked to pick a favourite album from his time with the band, the answer comes before the question is completed.

"Keeper II. I think it's unique, and it was completely different for the time when it came out. It has a cool sense of humour, it's lighthearted, and very obnoxious. The spirit in the band at that time was incredible. To this day, I still miss singing 'Eagle Fly Free'. That song was great on the album and even better live. That was the opener, so there was no way the crowd wasn't on your side by the time it was over." ☼





Behemoth

ENTER PANDEMONIUM!

by Chris Bruni

Along with the ascent of Poland's death metal scene in general, Behemoth have also made a crushing impact. Now, with the North American release of what could very well be the band's phoenix, *Zos Kia Cultus - Here And Beyond*, Behemoth's rise to glory will be unparalleled.

Zos Kia Cultus combines the very best moments of Behemoth's ten year career, most notably encompassing the clinching moments of such treasures as *Pandemonic Incantations*, their breakthrough Satanica album, and *Thelma 6*, all wrapped up in one tight, barbarically-woven package.

Speaking with founding member Nergal, the confidence that he bears in his cautious English is a confidence that's not conceited by any means, but one that's honest, deserving and heartfelt.

"It's hard for me to judge because I'm the composer, so I can't be objective," commences Nergal when comparing it to past efforts. "This one is much more insane, uncivilized, inhuman... much more majestic. On this album you can hear that we are not kids anymore. We are not just guys trying to play death/black metal. We are fucking aware of what we are doing these days. When it comes to *Pandemonic*, *Satanica*, and even *Thelma*, they were albums where we were trying to search for something. For this album, we know who we are, we know why we're here, and we are damn sure that we are good at what we do and love it. Everything on this record is done on purpose; there are no accidental things. It was very confident!"

Seeing that Behemoth have become the force to behold, it was with 1999's *Satanica* (released on Avantgarde Music) when the fire really began to spread. Is *Satanica* the turning point album?

"I used to say that," says Nergal, "but some people say it's *Pandemonic* because it was the first technical kind of direction that we took. For me it's *Satanica* because it was more confident than *Pandemonic*. Also we had a new deal and it was like a new chapter in our career; before we were dealing with assholes, liars, and idiots in the scene. But we started to treat the band more professionally. We started touring, we supported bands like *Deicide* and *Morbid Angel* in Europe, we did summer festivals and it started to move on with Avantgarde. And of course since we're with Century Media now, I'm insisting they bring us over to the States because for me, it's now or never. With this album we have to break through. I'm quite confident about our strength and our potential. I think we're strong enough to prove that this band is one of the leading death/black metal acts these days and we need the chance to go there. With Century Media, it could be a new chapter for us in the States. We even licensed our albums in the States since *Satanica*; this album is actually our third album released in the States. So it's to be or not to be."

"I was 15 when I formed the band," says Nergal, reminiscing about the band's black metal beginnings (from their demo days to such albums like *Grom* and *From The Pagan Vastlands*). At the moment, he's only 25 years old. "I mean look at *Sepultura*, they were like 14 when they formed. I mean there is no rule of course; you can start at 35 like Karl Sanders of Nile and become a really big band. So we're still young guys, we've been around for 11 years now, and we've been growing drastically. Some people have been impressed with how we have developed but that's what I consider an advantage of this band because it all changes drastically when you are young and so open-minded. When you are 25 it gets worse and worse (laughs). The older you get, the worse it gets. So believe me, it was really easy for us to develop because I don't think many people have a clue what age we are and I'm the oldest guy in the band. *Inferno* (drums) is 24 and *Havok* (guitars) is 20 years old. So we're still like a kid band. But we are experienced."

"I know there are some people accusing us for betraying our roots and that's bullshit," comments Nergal on the certain few who accuse Behemoth of being sellouts and so-called "traitors." "I mean how can you expect me to be 16 again? It's not possible. So people can't expect us to play like we played in '94 because I'm not able to play like that anymore, I'm not able to think like that anymore, I'm not able to write such songs anymore because I am a different person, and in five years I might be transformed again. Not drastically though..."

"But our following is getting bigger. The amount of people that appreciate us for being creative and expansive when it comes to musical territory is pretty crushing and there are just a little amount of people that complain because they have problems with themselves. You can't be a band that everybody loves; that's impossible. Our role in the scene is to be the thorn in their heads and all the people that understand what we're talking about, we're so glad for them; we respect and support them. But on the other hand we will show a big middle finger to the people who don't have a clue."

Over the past few years, as Poland has been recognized as a death metal haven, its controversial black metal scene has also reared its head. The Polish black metal underground has been quite vocal about their hatred for bands like Behemoth. Is the segregation between death and black in Poland that much of an issue?

"The black metal scene in Poland?" questions Nergal. "That's bullshit man! I tell you, there is no black metal scene. I can't consider a guy sitting in his apartment for his whole fucking life and recording albums on his computer calling it a band because a band is when you go on stage, do tours, and when you come back home and you are still alive... then you are a band. So I don't take these fucking black metal guys seriously. It's like ten guys making fools of themselves. We just played some gigs in Poland, and we went to the hometown of Graveland (Poland's most notorious black metal act) where they have all these Graveland freaks, and it's the safest place in the world to play. We've been there four times and when we go there, there are 300 freaks in Behemoth shirts that go to see us. So there's nothing behind it."

On the lyrical front, Behemoth deal with exotic occult-like histrionics and other such elusive and otherworldly topics.

"Nobody said that for extreme metal, you have to be straightforward. When you look at our cover, it's the Baphomet figure, but it's done in a splendid way. It's not like a Behemoth cover (laughs); it's much more sophisticated. The same goes for the lyrics; just take the first song 'Horns Of Baphomet'. It's a straightforward title but if you go deeper in the lyrics you see a manifest of power and human strength because I always try to write things that I experience myself. I try to base the lyrics on my life, use metaphors, try to be poetic, but not too much like in the past. I try to be convincing and on this album I wrote the most mature lyrics. It's about conquering and commanding. It's not about hiding in shadows. Like a friend of mine called it: Rome with all its might; I like that metaphor. I try to look around and not limit myself. I just finished university; I studied history. It might have helped me in some way to understand things; it's all based on human nature. And Krzysztof, the guy who co-wrote the lyrics with me, he kind of inspired me with so many topics; he poisoned my soul with Crowley. But when we meet different people on tour in different nations and from a different side of the world, that's the most inspiring thing I can imagine. When someone asks me what this band gave me, I tell them that it's the people that I've met and the places that I've been to. It's essential that I've learned so much about life and humans. So in a way our lyrics are not that far from what this life is all about. It's not like a fantasy. We just use some metaphors with names and barbaric invocations."

"Now that I'm 25 and that we've been around for 11 years, I just know my place now and my place is to play good quality music," reflects Nergal. "It doesn't matter what people call it. It's not my business. My business is to deliver the best music that I can deliver." ☘

DIVINE INTERVENTION

By Chris Bruni

ABORYM

Known for extracting some of the most trance-inducing, apocalyptic black metal chaos in the extreme music scene, Italy's Aborym (www.aborym.com), through a shamanistic rave-like portrayal, have set themselves up as one of the most harrowing, intimidating and controversial enigmas in black metal.

With their third and most cinematic epic, *With No Human Intervention*, Aborym have raised the bar for black metal, taking its standards and traditions and creating a prophetic vision within a world of unrelenting operatic chaos.

Making some waves with their debut release, *Kali Yuga Bizarre*, and making them tidal with 2001's *Fire Walk With Us*, Aborym and their new sound will inevitably signal some sort of paradigm shift. Guitarist Seth Teitan 131 and vocalist Attila Csihar (black metal's answer to Jim Morrison) have decided to shed light on this technocratic beast.

"The concept of this album is universal and apocalyptic," begins Attila. "The music is the transcendental vibration, while the lyrics are the incantations for the end of 'Kali Yuga'—the oriental name for this age of degradation. We are in the 'Iron Age,' as some gnostics call it. If you look around carefully in the world, almost within every source of information, you will find false permitted parts, and it looks like man has forgotten the original mission to find their 'exclusive real selves.' It's a kind of manipulated chaos now; it is the sign of this age. I mean almost all of what we heard from birth is mixed with false information. By this time it has grown so far, especially in the politics, morals, religions and in the sciences, that the nature or 'The Cosmic Ruler' should manifest its revenge in some transcendental material to end up sinking, and to protect the world, nature and the truth. It's really a positive thing; to destroy the false and to slay 'the thief kings' with their followers is like a curing operation on Mother Earth. We won't kill anyone; it will be done by itself. We are just artists, and our aim is to open the mind-eyes, and to give strength and joy to our fans. It will not be total destruction though. Several values will remain."

Seth: "Through my eyes, this album is, in a way, a channeling of the destructive vibes this fuck-hole earth is drenched with. Through the sound we forged, there's no hope for salvation at this point, and even if some of our ideas may differ, we all think the forthcoming destruction will be just the beginning and a really positive and good thing. I don't believe too much in any balance to be reached at this point anymore; human slaves deserve what they got. I just think that the energy I am moved by comes from outside the Cosmos, and it is slowly moving and shining, closer to unleash itself and destroy creation."

Talking about the album, we believe this is our best album so far."

Attila: "With *No Human Intervention* is a mass for the tragic, with a majestic solution."

"We suffered a lot during the making of this album," comments Seth. "And we experienced, at times, the grim ugly face of the 'reality where.' This time we basically wanted the music to speak louder and

deeper than anything else, and also not to see all our work and suffering ripped off and fucked by the people releasing our art. I don't know if it's right to talk about different aims anyway, but we knew that the third album is a fucking hard step for a band; just look at the history: with the third album you either fail or do something uninspired or you do your best. That was what we had in mind. I believe we did our best, thus succeeding in the task of keeping Aborym's integrity. We are probably just tools of the destructive, chaotic (and with chaos, I don't

mean the human-made confusion or mere earthly disorder but the True Chaos which was before all the shitty creation) current we were chosen to portray. Outside the cosmos and cosmic barriers lies the shining answer to the misery and injustice of creation."

The liner notes state that Aborym play "alien-black-hard/industrial exclusively". An off-the-charts statement if there ever was one. But since there are many layers to the madness, it is "the madness out in the world, not in our minds," says Attila. "The music that we are playing is also for the sub and supreme conscious. It's a medicine and 'katharsis' for them. Surely the twisted parts in the music touch some forgotten or unused parts of the brain. One aim is to wake up some of those sleeping parts since these days the humans mostly use their minds only to try to fulfill their primitive, programmed sub-animalistic desires."

Although Aborym portray a true black metal vision, there are electronics incorporated into the sound. Some may call this a contradiction; some accuse Aborym of being 'too techno.' "I think our music simply is very extreme," Attila explains. "You can call it whatever; it's even hard to define the style of the music for myself. Surely it's a mix of black metal, classical, and modern technocratics: the past, present and the future. I'm very satisfied with our style because it's balanced in many opposite directions."

"Let everybody talk and have their opinion," continues Seth. "We don't really care if somebody has to criticize just for the sake of it, or for the 'techno' thing. We have been into extreme music in its many facets for a long time so we know what we are doing and we are aware of the transcendental power flowing in the chaotic whirlwind of our sound."

Aborym have also fallen under some controversy in the past, people claiming that the band support racist/fascist ideologies.

Attila: "It is too bad that we have been suffering from that. It's just because of our debut album; there was some mention about fascist magic (which came basically from our past singer).

Personally I can't share any Nazi or racist ideology! I think both of them are just bullshit. It's stupid to define a person only by their nationality or skin colour. And don't forget that this life is the same prison for all of us: the tragic fate in a crypt is always the same to everyone."

Seth: "The thing is, Aborym was never about supporting any political idea. I fucking despise politics. It's just some kind of human disease that we really avoid. At this point, speaking of myself, I don't really think one race is better or worse than the other. There's no salvation ahead anyway..."

It's interesting to see how the futuristic aura of the band almost clashes with Italy's rich archaic history. Even though times have changed, from the secular age to the technological age, what is the missing link to the past, if there is one?

"I love the archaic history," Attila exclaims. "But the Roman Empire is my favourite. I'm really proud of that period in history. What is the link to the past? Well it seems like the false religion destroyed most of the links. What we have now is mostly just ruins. But from the people's mentality, the past has completely disappeared. Thanks to the aggressive force of these slave religions, not only the Roman, but many other cultures have failed and their original culture, history, their tales, their mythology was burned in the fire of the religious invaders."

Italy is also known as a strong religious nation; has this affected the band in any way? Known as a haven for beautiful and fascinating ancient pieces of art (although mainly Christian-themed), Italy and its aesthetic still must impress, does it not?

"Rome is the center of today's western religion. That is why I'm very proud to play extreme music here," says Attila. "Religion sometimes makes the 'atmosphere' very hot here. But it's like being in the heart of the enemy. I'm not against the architectural stuff. I like and appreciate that form of art a lot too! I would never destroy a building which is beautiful because I'm not a primitive intruder. I would just change its order completely. I would change those temples to 'Trance-Party-Places' where you could have fun anytime instead of self-destruction and depression."

"Anyway for me, Rome is one of the most beautiful ancient cities on Earth; it is really incredible. Almost every day I pass near the places like the Coliseum, and I can't fulfill the hunger of my eyes. If you go down under the ground you find other ruins and cities from other parts of the history; many cities were built on each other. Wherever you go you just find ruins of old civilizations. I really love the spirit here, apart from the false religions."

"Now hopefully we will finally be able to have some fruits from our 'Aborym-tree,'" says Attila summing up. "It has grown from its seed in the last years, broke through the shitty parasites and now it has risen over the other trees in the forest." ☸



Nightingale

Progressive Death Gone Too Far?!

By Martin Popoff

What happens when you cross a singer who sounds like David Coverdale with '80s prog (Marillion, Asia, GTR, Collins-era Genesis, Steve Hackett) and one of the legendary Swedish death metal minds of all time? Nightingale of course, Dan Swano's one true band now, a lush and keyboardy class act now onto their fourth album, called elaborately *Alive Again: The Breathing Shadow Part IV*.

"I would say that in many ways, this is the first Nightingale album, to be written and recorded as a band," sez Swano, agreeing wholeheartedly with the brotherhood mentality of the proj... er, band. "Because after the 'I' album was released, everything died and me and my brother (ed. Dag, known as Tom to minimize confusion) decided that that was a good time to bury Nightingale and start a new project from scratch where we felt that we would be equal in the line-up. And then one thing led to another and we found these two guys, a drummer and the bass player, and we started playing shows and we felt that just having these guys around, all the old material sounded so much more vital. So it felt natural not to throw Nightingale away because there were so many good songs coming out of the back catalog that we had a solid set. So it was the first time that me and my brother were composing to have the line-up playing it and also to see beyond the album. The end of every Nightingale album had been pretty much the mastering. It's like, 'OK, I did *The Breathing Shadow* and now it's time to do another thing, another project.' But this time the release is the beginning of

the whole project. If there would've been something happening when the other albums came out, there was no band to back it up. And pretty much the title sums up that we are alive again and this is a project turning into as much of the band as you can have these days."

Lyricaly, the album goes beyond concept "album" by reaching back and intertwining with the other albums, but musically, this is Swano at his swankiest, layering keyboards like a pop prog supergroup might.

"I would say the influences on this album are different than on the other three albums," explains Swano, touching off a look back into his youth. "Nightingale albums were this thing that happen when I was trying out new ideas. The first one came out because I was going through a goth rock period. And the second was like a sister album to this one because I just started writing in the vein grew up with. But I never had the time to really fulfill any ideas, and *The Closing Chronicles* was written and recorded in about a week and we spent years and years doing this album. So all the '80s influences come from me, and all the '70s influence come from

my brother; he was born in '63 and I was born in '73, so there's a ten year difference. So naturally he was kind of nursing me with my music. I remember trying to fall asleep and get up for kindergarten and he was playing all these prog epics thundering through the wall. So I kind of skipped the Iron Maiden stage and I was brought up on prog epics. And I remember going through his record collection when he wasn't home and listening to Gentle Giant when I was nine and stuff like that, which is pretty rare I guess. For this, I wanted the melodies to be this Asia, pop-proggish thing; very simple. So I was just going through it myself. What do I like? What is the sound I want to hear? What is missing in my record collection? I want to write that record. All these tracks are just a mixture of all the stuff I totally like. And I know my brother wrote his songs the same way. We all have this, 'This is a bit like UFO mixed with Spock's Beard, mixed with Genesis without Phil Collins.' Then it's 'Oh, you better listen to this part; this sounds like Foreigner but on the early records, and this is Gamma, but not the third album.' And we were having the time of our lives just writing the songs because we finally got to dig within ourselves knowing that we could release this. We don't really care what people say because this is our chance to play the music we really want to play, do it with great musicians, make great production and have it released (laughs)." ☼



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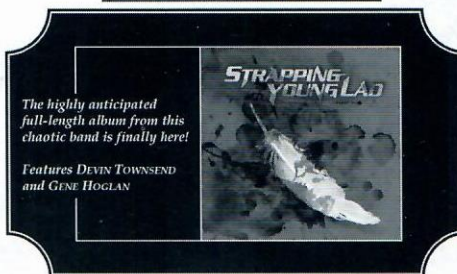
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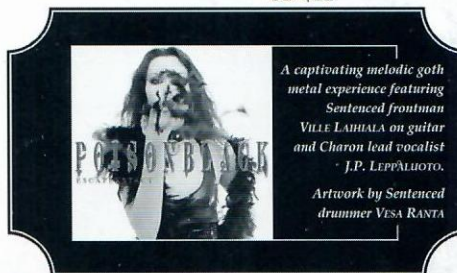
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BRAVE RARITIES

AC/DC - Reissue Update!

More details have been revealed about the forthcoming AC/DC reissues that commence the band's new deal with Epic/Sony Music. The first three waves of CDs are confirmed as follows. February 18th: Back In Black, Live 1992, High Voltage, Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap, Highway To Hell. March 25th: The Razor's Edge, Who Made Who, For Those About To Rock (We Salute You), Let There Be Rock, Powerage. May 20th: If You Want Blood (You've Got It), Flick Of The Switch, Fly On The Wall, '74 Jailbreak, Blow Up Your Video. The release of the Bonfire Box Set is still to be confirmed. All reissues are remastered (again!) and will be released in deluxe digipaks and utilize Sony's proprietary Connected technology to unlock special online content created for each release which will soon be available at the website www.acdcrocks.com. The titles will also feature restored album art, as well as enhanced packaging including additional rare and historic photos, new liner notes, and comprehensive track information. Each album will also be issued on deluxe 180 gram vinyl.

As well, the Atlantic video vaults have also opened and AC/DC's visual catalogue will be available for the first time on DVD. Titles tentatively scheduled for May 20 are the following: Let There Be Rock (1979), Live At Donington (1991), Who Made Who (1986), Fly On The Wall (1985) and Clipped (1991).

AC/DC's move to Sony Music Entertainment reunites the band with two executives who played a major role in their early success, Epic Records Chairman David R. Glew, who helped guide AC/DC's career during his tenure as Executive Vice President/General Manager of Atlantic Records, and Epic's Executive Vice President and General Manager, Steve Barnett, who previously served as the band's manager.

In the U.S., AC/DC has earned the fifth highest ranking in terms of album certifications, according to the RIAA. The band's 1980 release, Back In Black, has sold an impressive 41 million copies worldwide, making it the sixth highest-selling album in history. AC/DC will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March of 2003. The band's next studio album will complete their contract with Elektra/Warner, the label the band have been with for the past 26 years.

In other AC/DC news, Image Entertainment will release a new DVD in the US this month. The disc will feature the 1977 BBC television footage of the band at London's Hippodrome in October 1977. Clocking in at 41 minutes, tracks include: 'Let There Be Rock', 'Problem Child', 'Hell Ain't A Bad Place To Be', 'Whole Lotta Rosie', 'Bad Boy Boogie', 'Rockin' and 'TNT'.

Meanwhile, an exclusive, career-encompassing Australian-only 17 CD box set was released in Australia through Festival Mushroom Records.

EMPEROR - Evil Anthology!

In March, Candlelight Records is releasing an EMPEROR anthology called Scattered Ashes - A Decade of Imperial Wrath. The full tracklisting put together by the band themselves features the following tracks: CD1 - 'Curse You All Men', 'The Tongue Of Fire', 'The Majesty Of The Night Sky', 'Cosmic Keys To My Creations & Times', 'Wrath Of The Tyrant', 'The Loss & Curse Of Reverence', 'An Elegy Of Icaros', 'I Am The Black Wizards', 'Thus Spake The Nightspirit (live)', 'Ye Entrancement', 'In The Wordless Chamber', 'With Strength I Burn', 'Inno A Satana'. CD2 - 'A Fine Day To Die', 'Aerie Descent', 'Cromlech', 'Gypsy', 'Funeral Fog', 'I Am', 'Sworn (ULVER remix)', 'Lords Of The Storms', 'My Empire's Doom', 'Moon Over Kara-Shehr', 'Witches Sabbath', 'Ancient Queen' and 'In Longing Spirit'. As for a reunion, Emperor guitarist Samoth told BW&BK that the event won't happen anytime soon!

QUEENSRYCHE Reissues Feature Bonus Material!

More than 20 years on from the release of QUEENSRYCHE's self-titled debut EP, EMI is reissuing the disc and the six albums that followed: The Warning, Rage For Order, Operation: Mindcrime, Empire, Promised Land and Hear In The Now Frontier. Each of the releases has been repackaged with bonus tracks, unreleased photos, memorabilia and liner notes by lead vocalist Geoff Tate and Paul Suter (who wrote the first demo review in Kerrang!, which eventually was responsible for getting the band signed).

The first phase of the promotion begins with the April 8th re-release of Queensryche, The Warning, Rage For Order and Operation: Mindcrime, followed by the May 6th re-releases of Empire, Promised Land and Hear In The Now Frontier. These albums cover the first 14 years of Queensryche's career.

Bonus materials on the reissues will include: Queensryche - 50 extra minutes of bonus material pulled from 1985's Live In Tokyo video/laserdisc, including 'Deliverance' and 'Child Of Fire'; The Warning - 'Take Hold Of The Flame' (live), 'Prophecy' and 'The Lady Wore Black' (live); Rage For Order - 'The Killing Words' (live), 'Walk In The Shadows' (live), 'Gonna Get Close To You' (12" mix) and 'I Dream In Infra Red' (acoustic remix); Operation: Mindcrime - 'The Mission' (live) and 'My Empty Room (live); Empire - 'Last Time In Paris', 'Dirty Lil' Secret' and 'Scarborough Fair' (SIMON & GARFUNKEL cover); Promised Land - 'Real World' (studio version), 'Real World' (live), 'Someone Else' (live) and 'Damaged' (live); Hear In The Now Frontier - 'Chasing Blue Sky', 'The Killing Words' (MTV Unplugged), 'I Will Remember' (MTV Unplugged) and 'Silent Lucidity' (MTV Unplugged).

BLACK SABBATH are set to release a new DVD called Never Say Die, recorded live in 1978 and featuring the following tracks: 'Symptom Of The Universe', 'War Pigs', 'Snowblind', 'Never Say Die', 'Black Sabbath', 'Dirty Women', 'Rock And Roll Doctor', 'Electric Funeral', 'Children Of The Grave' and 'Paranoid'. Black Mark Records will celebrate **BATHORY's** 20th Anniversary with the re-release of the band's catalog on vinyl LPs. Each title will be remastered and will come with enhanced layout and full colour lyric sheet. The following titles will be available: Bathory, The Return..., Under The Sign Of The Black Mark, Blood Fire Death, Hammerheart and Twilight Of The Gods. Meanwhile Nordland I will be out on March 31st as a limited digipak (North American street date is April 28th). On April 14th Nordland I and II will be released as a double vinyl set. **FAITH NO MORE's** This Is It: The Best Of Faith No More will be released via Rhino Records. The tracklisting: 'Arabian Disco', 'We Care A Lot' (Slash Version), 'Anne's Song', 'Introduce Yourself', 'From Out Of Nowhere', 'Epic', 'Falling To Pieces', 'War Pigs' (**BLACK SABBATH** cover), 'The Cowboy Song', 'As The Worm Turns' (Live 1990), 'Midlife Crisis', 'A Small Victory', 'Be Aggressive', 'Easy' (**COMMODORES** cover), 'Digging The Grave', 'Evidence', 'Last Cup Of Sorrow', 'Ashes To Ashes' and 'The Perfect Crime'. Snapper Records will launch a new imprint, Snapper Classics, this year. The label will issue original albums remastered and repackaged in stunning digipaks. The first titles to be released will be **W.A.S.P.'s** W.A.S.P. and **JUDAS PRIEST's** Sad Wings Of Destiny. Roadrunner will release a compilation, The Heart Of Roadrunner Records, on March 18th. The tracklisting is currently being hashed out, but you can expect goods from **KING DIAMOND** to **OBITUARY** and **TYPE O NEGATIVE** to **LIFE OF AGONY**. Many tracks will be previously unreleased... **HAMMERFALL's** Glory To The Brave - Deluxe Edition is available in Europe. The enhanced disc includes a bonus track and video clip... **HYPOCRISY's** Abducted album is available in Europe in the Classic Series. It now features new cover artwork and four bonus tracks... In the spring, Versailles Records will release **TREX** frontman **MARC BOLAN's** first solo album, 'You Scare Me To Death' for the first time on CD in the US... **EUROPE** will release a CD/DVD box this year containing the group's biggest hits as well as demos, live recordings and previously unreleased material. The band (frontman Joey Tempest, guitarist John Norum, guitarist Kee Marcello, drummer Ian Haugland, keyboardist Mic Michaeli and bassist John Leven) met recently in Stockholm Sweden to decide what will be included in the package... **SAXON's** official website, www.saxon747.com, has revealed details of the band's forthcoming DVD release, The Saxon Chronicles. Scheduled for release in March, the set will include the band's show from Wacken Open Air 2001 (filmed with ten cameras), a live audio CD featuring tracks from WOA 2001, an interview with vocalist Biff Byford, a rare interview with cover artist Paul Raymond Gregory, Fan Cam video recordings taken by the band on the road, a complete band discography, band history, video clips for 'Killing Ground' and 'Unleash The Beast' and extra features and gimmicks. The DVD can be preordered at the merchandise page on the website. In other news, Saxon's newly released Live In Nottingham CD is the audio version of their Classic Rock Legends DVD... In **OPETH** news, there are rumours of an ultra limited vinyl release of the two Blackwater Park bonus songs, 'Still Day Beneath The Sun' and 'Patterns In The Ivy'. These are scheduled for release on 7" vinyl soon. It will be limited to 1,250 copies... **YES** will reissue four of their classic albums (their self-titled debut, Time And A Word, The Yes Album and Fragile) as remastered and expanded versions. They will include rare tracks (including cover songs)... **THE KILLER DWARFS'** classic Stand Tall from 1986 will finally be reissued in remastered and repackaged format, sporting both the original inserts and new liner notes from the band... **METALLICA's** legendary self-titled album (The Black Album) from 1991 was the biggest selling "deep catalog" (more than five years old) of 2002, moving more than 540,000 copies. The album has sold more than 12.98 million copies to date, making it the third best-selling album of the SoundScan era (dating back to May 1991). The top two records are Canadian women (!) - **SHANIA TWAIN's** Come On Over (from 1997 - an unbelievable 14.4 million copies) and **ALANIS MORISSETTE's** Jagged Little Pill (from 1995 - 13.89 million copies)... Cogumelo Records is reissuing **HEADHUNTER D.C.'s** Born... Suffer... Die album from 1991. The album also includes the Hell Is Here demo and other rare recordings, such as live tracks and unreleased studio tracks as bonus material. The booklet also contains unpublished photographs from the 1990/1992 years. According to the label, the record is "a landmark in Brazilian Death Metal history"... **THE WHO** will have a double CD commemorating their Teenage Cancer Trust benefit show at London's Royal Albert Hall issued in March by SPV. The live performance happened in September 2000. Four bonus cuts will also be featured: 'I Don't Even Know Myself', 'I'm Free', 'Summertime Blues' and 'Young Man Blues'. Noise Records is issuing a **RUNNING WILD** two-CD collection. The first CD contains a minimum of 14 remastered songs of their Noise Era, some of which are remixed or newly recorded songs, plus two unreleased tracks. The second CD will contain various old video clips and backstage material... **LITA FORD's** Greatest Hits Live will be released on February 17th via SPV. The album's lead off track is a new studio recording called 'Nobody's Child'. **CANNIBAL CORPSE's** Classic Cannibal Corpse is a 4CD limited edition box (1,000 copies worldwide) which includes digipak versions of the albums Eaten Back To Life, Butchered At Birth and Tomb Of The Mutilated as well as full colour posters of all three original artworks. In Europe, each title is also available individually and are remastered and comes with new booklet layout and complete uncensored artwork. Each title also includes a bonus live audio track and a bonus video track... **AXE's** 1981 Atlantic album, Offering, and 1983 Atco record, Nemesis, have been reissued in Europe... A new DVD from the **IAN GILLAN BAND** has been released in Europe. Live At The Rainbow features 1976 concert footage... An **ATOMIC ROOSTER** DVD has been issued in Europe called Masters From The Vault, featuring live material from 1972... **DIAMOND HEAD** has issued Evil & Evil Extras, a new 2CD package recorded live at the National Bowl in 1993... **HANOI ROCKS** has released a 4CD box in Europe featuring seven unreleased tracks and a 40 page booklet... **SPIDER's** self-titled debut (from 1980) and Between The Lines (1981) have been reissued in Europe... Three instructional **METALLICA** DVDs have been released in the US that cover the period 1983-88. Bass, drums and guitar are featured on each DVD... **DETENTE's** Recognize No Authority, originally released in 1986 by Metal Blade and featuring the late vocalist Dawn Crosby, has been reissued in Europe... A reissue series from Europe called Two Originals has packaged the following as 3CD and 2CD sets accordingly: **FATES WARNING's** Still Life, Disconnected and A Pleasant Shade Of Gray and **SKYCLAD's** The Answer Machine and Vintage Whine... **CENTINEX** back catalog will be digitally remastered and reissued through Candlelight in 2003. Each title will include previously unavailable bonus material and new artwork... Image Entertainment Inc. will be releasing the entire BBC's ROCK MASTERS concert series on DVD. First up is **THIN LIZZY's** 1983 performance. It will be followed by **AC/DC** (from 1977)... **BRITNY FOX** has just released Fan Club CD #3 at www.britnyfox.net. The CD is entitled The Bit Down Hard Demo Sessions and features 19 demo tracks including covers of **AC/DC's** 'Riff Raff' and **QUEEN's** 'Stone Cold Crazy' and **CCR's** 'Sweet Hitch-Hiker'. **SCORPIONS** Taken By Force album has been reissued with the bonus tracks 'Suspender Love' and 'Polar Nights' (live)... **LED ZEPPELIN's** 2CD set, Early Days & Latter Days is out now through Warner. It features the best of Zeppelin and includes two enhanced videos, 'Communication Breakdown' and 'Kashmir'... Back in 1985 Paul Speckmann/MASTER were signed by US label Combat, and recorded a scheduled debut album the same year. Due to insurmountable differences the contract got torn up and Paul went on with his new band **DEATHSTRIKE**. After the reunion, Master were signed to Nuclear Blast and recorded man

albums in the '90s. Now, almost 20 years later, the original 1985 album recordings have surfaced and will be released on CD and LP. The release will come with early 1990s demo tracks as a bonus. Expect a May release... A digitally remastered version of the entire **OBITUARY** back catalogue is available in Japan through Roadrunner Records, with bonus tracks having been added to *Slowly We Rot* (1989 - two tracks), *Cause Of Death* (1990 - three tracks), *The End Complete* (1992 - three tracks) and *World Demise* (1994 - three tracks). Roadrunner Japan has also re-released the following without bonus tracks: **DEICIDE** - *Deicide* (1990), *Legion* (1992), **CYNIC** - *Focus* (1993), **MALEVOLENT CREATION** - *Retribution* (1992), *Stillborn* (1993), **DISINCARNATE** - *Dreams Of The Carrion Kind* (1993), **MACHINE HEAD**'s *Burn My Eyes* (1994), **WHIPLASH**'s *Insult To Injury* (1990), **DEFIANCE**'s *Void Terra Firma* (1990), **HEATHEN**'s *Victims Of Deception* (1991), **SADUS**' *A Vision Of Misery* (1992)... EMI are set to release **PINK FLOYD**'s *The Dark Side Of The Moon* on Super Audio CD on March 4th to coincide with the 30th Anniversary of the title. This is the first time the album will be presented in full 5.1 surround sound, having been remixed and remastered for hybrid SACD by long time Pink Floyd producer/engineer James Guthrie... Due to high demand and total unavailability, Displeased Records will reissue the debut albums from **NIN-NGHIZHIDDA** (Blasphemy plus one bonus track) and **INTERNAL SUFFERING** (Supreme Knowledge Domain plus three bonus tracks)... Displeased has reissued LP versions of **ULVER**'s *Nattens Madrigal*, **BORKNAGAR**'s *Olden Domain* and **CRYPTOPSY**'s *Whisper Supremacy*... **SIKSABUR**'s first two albums, *The Carnage* and *Back To Vengeance* have been remastered and pressed together on one disc to be released in February through Displeased... **MANIAC BUTCHER**'s posthumously released material is out in March through Displeased/From Beyond. The CD/LP will feature raw live recordings from four different Maniac Butcher gigs done in Germany between 1997 and 2000... Vancouver's **SIR HEDGEHOG** are reissuing their self-titled debut in the US. The remastered album is now repackaged with bonus material and will be released on February 25th... Avantgarde Music have reissued a remastered version of **ULVER**'s *Nattens Madrigal* album... American speed metal band, **FORTE**, are about to re-release four albums (1992's *Stranger Than Fiction*, '94's *Division*, '98's *Destructive* and 00's *Rise Above*) on Germany's Massacre Records. The band have recently re-launched a new site at www.infiniterrecords.net... The initial run of **RUSH**'s forthcoming collection, *The Spirit of Radio - Greatest Hits (1974-1987)*, will feature an added value DVD featuring the following videos: 'Closer To The Heart', 'Tom Sawyer', 'Subdivisions', 'The Big Money' and 'Mystic Rhythms'. The DVD also includes complete lyrics to every song on the compilation and an Easter egg of lyrics to 'Mystic Rhythms'. The album is due out as you read this through Anthem/Universal. ☼

FATES WARNING - DVD Details Viewed Here!

FATES WARNING's *The View From Here* DVD will be out in Europe on February 24th via Metal Blade. The disc includes the following: the making of *Disconnected*, the making of *Parallels*, interviews with original members Joe DiBiase and Frank Aresti, photo gallery, discography, video archive including: 'Silent Cries' (1988), 'Anarchy Divine' (1988), 'Through Different Eyes' (1989), 'Nothing Left To Say' (live 1998), 'Point Of View' (1991), 'Eye To Eye' (1992), 'Monument' (1994), 'Pleasant Shade Of Gray Parts X-XII' (1997), 'At Fates Hands' (live 1998), 'Prelude To Ruin' (live 1998) and 'The Eleventh Hour/Point Of View' (live at Dynamo 1998).

OZZY OSBOURNE - Another Cash-Grab!

Sony have released **OZZY OSBOURNE**'s new collection, *The Essential Ozzy Osbourne*. The digitally remastered 29 track 2CD set is filled with Ozzy classics. The tracklisting; CD1 - 'Crazy Train', 'Mr. Crowley', 'I Don't Know' (Live), 'Suicide Solution', 'Goodbye To Romance', 'Over The Mountain', 'Flying High Again', 'Diary Of A Madman', 'Paranoid' (Live), 'Bark At The Moon', 'You're No Different', 'Rock 'n' Roll Rebel', 'Crazy Babies', 'Miracle Man', 'Fire In The Sky' and 'Breakin' All The Rules'. CD2 - 'Mama, I'm Coming Home', 'Desire', 'No More Tears', 'Time After Time', 'Road To Nowhere', 'I Don't Want To Change The World' (Live), 'Perry Mason', 'I Just Want You', 'Thunder Underground', 'See You On The Other Side', 'Gets Me Through', 'Dreamer' and 'No Easy Way Out'.

SPINAL TAP - Movie Preserved!

SPINAL TAP's "mockumentary" film *This Is Spinal Tap* is one of the movies selected this year for preservation by the National Film Registry/Library Of Congress. The registry now contains 350 films. Making the list helps "ensure that the film is preserved for all time," the library said in a statement. "The selection of a film, I stress, is not an endorsement of its ideology or content, but rather a recognition of the film's importance in American film and cultural history and history in general," Congressional Librarian James H. Billington said. Emphasizing the need to preserve film, Billington said that half the movies produced before 1950 and between 80 and 90 percent of those dating before 1920 have been lost to chemical deterioration.

DEEP PURPLE - Dig Into The Live Archives!

According to their website, Purple Records will release another live album next year. It will be called *Perks & Tit* and it was recorded live in San Diego on April 9, 1974 (3 days after the classic California Jam). The tracks on the album will include: 'Burn', 'Might Just Take Your Life', 'Lay Down, Stay Down', 'Mistreated', 'Smoke On The Water' and 'Jon Lord solo'. The album is planned to be released this month. As well, **DEEP PURPLE**'s California Jam 1974 and Gemini Suite Live are being reissued/remastered in Japan in a limited edition paper sleeves on February 21st. In Japan, **DEEP PURPLE**'s *Machine Head Live* is being released in a limited cardboard sleeve containing 12 tracks recorded in Denmark.

ROGER GLOVER posted the following update on his site recently about the band's forthcoming *Machine Head* DVD and new material. About the DVD he stated that "It is wonderful; a lot of extra material. The most exciting part is video footage of us in the '70s, at Hofstra University on Long Island, New York, playing 'Smoke On The Water' - as far as I know, the ONLY ('72-'73) film/video of us playing that song. Great stuff. Dick Clark owns it. Martin Smith, who put the documentary together, negotiated but was allowed only a minute or so of the footage. Dick Clark won't sell it, apparently."

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Hard Wares

recorded rumblings unleashed!

Based on the good ol' rating out of ten, Hard-Wares is judged on a basket of goods containing song-writing, musicianship, production, creativity and overall coolness: 1 - actively, violently, heinously awful. 5 - mired in mediocrity, lost in the pack. 10 - god-like and majestic, basking in brilliance. You fill in the obvious blanks.

BRAVE PICKS 67

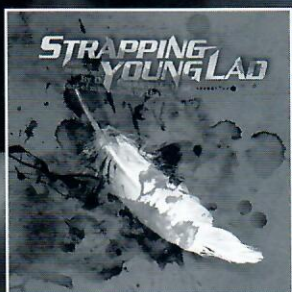
Tim Henderson Martin Popoff Mark Gromen Carl Begai Aaron Small Chris Bruni Average

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|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media) | 8 | 8.5 | 6 | 8.5 | 9 | 7.5 | 7.9 |
| MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM/The End) | 8.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 7.8 |
| CRADLE OF FILTH - Damnation And A Day (Epic/Sony) | 7.5 | 8 | 7.5 | 8.5 | 9.5 | 5 | 7.7 |
| GOD DETHRONED - Into The Lungs Of Hell (Metal Blade) | 8 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 7.5 |
| NAIL WITHIN - Nail Within (Listenable) | 7 | 8.5 | 7 | 7 | 7.5 | 7 | 7.3 |
| STRATOVARIUS - Elements Pt. 1 (Nuclear Blast) | 7.5 | 7.5 | 6.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.3 |
| GRAVE - Back From The Grave (Century Media) | 8 | 8 | 5.5 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 7.2 |
| BEHEMOTH - Zos Kia Cultus (Here and Beyond) (Olympic) | 7.5 | 7.5 | 6.5 | 6 | 7 | 8.5 | 7.2 |
| KAMELOT - The Fourth Legacy (Noise) | 7.5 | 7 | 8 | 8.5 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| O.S.I. - Office Of Strategic Influence (InsideOut) | 7.5 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 5.5 | 7 | 7 |
| NIGHTINGALE - Alive Again: The Breathing Shadow Part IV (The End) | 6 | 8.5 | 5 | 7.5 | 7 | 7.5 | 6.9 |
| ABORYM - With No Human Intervention (Code666) | 6 | 7 | 5 | 7.5 | 6 | 9.5 | 6.8 |
| SOLACE - 13 (MeteorCity) | 6 | 7.5 | 7 | 7.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.8 |
| NIGHT/IN/GALES - Necrodynamic (Skyscraper Music) | 6.5 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5.5 | 6.5 |
| DIONYSUS - Dionysus (AFM) | 6 | 5.5 | 7 | 6.5 | 7 | 5.5 | 6.2 |
| MERAUDER - Bluetality (Century Media) | 4 | 7.5 | 4 | 6.5 | 7.5 | 1 | 5.1 |

BRAVE PICK Of The Month!

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD

SYL (Century Media)



Rewriting the definition of chaos, Vancouver's Devin Townsend transforms disorder and confusion into glorious musical extremity. The song titles are key indicators to the ferocious nature of this album: 'Rape Song', 'Devour', 'Force Fed', 'Relentless', 'Aftermath'. SYL continues the punishment that City dished out five years ago. Spinning this CD is like setting a circular power saw into motion, SYL creating sharp, jagged edges that combine to create a deadly weapon. Uncompromising in every aspect, influenced by the events of September 11th, this unholy resonance can only be compared to the most massive of volcanic eruptions. Gene Hoglan violates his drum kit while guitarist Jed Simon and bassist Byron Stroud do battle with Devin, on keyboards and vocals in a genre-melting metal mother ship, creating black, death, thrash and industrial all shoved into an unbridled musical war. Beyond average is a tremendous understatement. The single blood-stained feather on the cover is indicative of the result after the final song 'Bring On The Young' has come to an end. No one is left standing. Both band and listener are completely exhausted. Throbbing rage fills the screams heard across an ocean: "Die bastard die bastard burn." SYL is a slightly demented, definitely mind-blowing album easily capable of knocking you off your feet.

Aaron Small9

MASTERPLAN

Masterplan (AFM/The End)

Probably never find out the real truth behind the exits of drummer Uli Kusch and guitarist Roland Grapow (both ousted by Helloween) or the defection of Jorn Lande (from Ark), but the gossip seems rather irrelevant now at this juncture given the manner the Masterplan pieces fell into place. No surprise as the 'weenie legends have been around the block a number of times and their professionalism managed to shine up to the Weikath-dissed The Dark Ride (one third of the record was credited to Kusch/Grapow - Weikath had only one sixth of the writing credits). Lande himself is no spring chicken in this biz and his voice shone brightly on Ark's Burn The Sun record. But the threesome (along with bassist Jan-S. Eckert and keyboardist Axel Mackenrodt) have concocted different plans of world domination while their noses are up at their former mates. Masterplan is a surging epic that harkens back to the classic vibe of vintage orchestrated metal as Rainbow-isms run rampant and Lande's Coverdale-like class shines. 'Spirit Never Die' kicks the record off soundly with 'weenies in fuel-injection mode with axes wailing and arms flailing, while the first single, 'Enlighten Me', merges crunch with a softened chorus line. Michael Kiske guests on 'Heroes' (the closest we'll get to a classic Helloween reunion) a rather blunt stab at their former bandmates, that draws from the Keepers-era. Grapow's virtuosity is transposed to greater heights on 'Crystal Night', whereas 'Bleeding Eyes' is akin to John Sykes during Blue Murder's glorious debut. The ballad,

'When Love Comes Close', is the album closer, a moody expose displaying the record's emotional tendencies. Heavy or mellow, Lande's presence is soothing and shatterproof. As Helloween readies their new record (due out in May), there's no doubt they can sense a prowler in the midst. Masterplan's initial bite should be enough to frighten the hell outta them.

Tim Henderson8.5



CRADLE OF FILTH

Damnation And A Day (Sony)

Beginning with thunderous storm clouds, Cradle Of Filth abruptly drops the curtain on the most accomplished album of their career, 17 sinfully delightful tracks comprising Cradle's first release on a major label. There had been a fair amount of trepidation amongst fans that the move from Snapper to Sony would result in their beloved black metal becoming watered down. Such is

not the case. In fact, it has allowed COF to further expand their realm of darkness by including a 40 piece orchestra and 32 piece choir. When vocalist Dani said fans would be "spellbound" by this new album, he was exactly right. Damnation is a gripping, enthralling record complete with layer upon layer of lavish musical witchcraft. More variance between the songs exists now than ever before. 'Damned In Any Language', 'The Mordant Liquor Of Tears' and 'A Scarlet Witch Lit The Season' are all haunting classical interludes while 'The Promise Of Fever' and 'An Enemy Led The Tempest' are fast and invigorating. 'Better To Reign In Hell' is one of the strongest of the bunch with its hook immediately latching on and never letting go. First single, 'Babalon A.D.' features a short but sold riff that initially is surprising but utterly enjoyable when it comes around again. Dani continues to do what he does best; shrieking, howling and singing in a manner that sends the faint of heart fleeing in every direction. At just under 77 minutes long, Damnation And A Day is a scowling black metal triumph.

Aaron Small9.5

GOD DETHRONED

Into The Lungs Of Hell (Metal Blade)

Caught in a conundrum of perhaps not being taken too seriously, God Dethroned are on the rise with this darkened presence and they are intent to make their mark last. With the band no doubt suffering from an identity crisis, Into The Lungs From Hell shall clear any misconception. The down-tuned gurgle of the title/opening track casts a dark shadow over proceedings. Slow, brooding and menacing all in one bite, Into The Lungs Of Hell blends Hypocrisy, Comecon With Benediction and spits blood on the feet of Satan. Singer Henri Sattler is seething on 'The Warcult', 'Slaughtering The Faithful' and especially and 'Soulsweeper' where he screams 'Your god is dead, I am the devil!' Clocking in at just over 37 minutes, God Dethroned's latest death/thrash opus is not overbearing or overfilling; it makes for an eight-course feast that feeds a nocturnal craving. Like Amon Amarth, God Dethroned is taking death metal down fresh corridors of casualty. Special bonus for fans is the limited edition bonus CD containing six rare live songs, two video clips for 'Villa Vampiria' and 'Under The Golden Wings Of Death' and the re-recorded version of God Dethroned's cover of Possessed's 'Satan's Curse'.

Tim Henderson7.5

NAILED WITHIN

Debut (Listenable)

Formed from the ashes of Israeli extreme metal acts Betrayer and Azazel, comes this new extreme metal force that have undoubtedly had their fair shares of indulging in such classic albums as Endless Pain, Pleasure To Kill, and Slaughter Of The Soul. Surely, this German thrash-worshipping entity decide to make no qualms about their mission at hand, mixing the early Kreator and At The Gates formula in their vicious cauldron. At times, it does seem quite obvious; vocalist Yishai Searwats coming across as the bastard child of Mille Petrozza of the Kreator and Tomas Lindberg fornicated, the production being helmed by Kreator/Sodom/Helloween/Voivod producer Harris Johns in Germany of course. But the real pleasure of this is the many cameo appearances found within: Roberto Gonnella (Assassin, his first appearance since 1988) on the track 'Bleed Forever', Zeev Tananboim (Salem) on 'Inhuman Conditions' and the crowning achievement, Mille and Tomas Lindberg doing guest vocals on the album's stand-out track, 'Dirty Colored Knife'.

Chris Bruni7

GRAVE

Back From The Grave (Century Media)

The sound is intact after six years away - thank

the crypt-kickers - as Grave take their Dismember-meets-Crowbar menace into the next thousand years. Nothing much ever happened for these guys, but with the current mini-wave of bands (and supergroups) revisiting original Swedish death, it might be time for Grave and their cube van full of weighty, axle-breaking riffs, to get their due. Back From The Grave's crustified guitars are the key selling ingredient, while the doom and sophistication of the riffs they envelope enhance a situation somewhat lessened by a craptacious, somewhat cheaply American death drum sound. Although given the massive storm-clouds behind these riffs, one gets the impression that putting the drums back in the mix was a deliberate choice designed to showcase the frightening scope, heft and intelligence of these classy riffs. Comes with a second disc stuffed with rare early demos.

Martin Popoff8

BEHEMOTH

Zos Kia Cultus (Olympic)

It seems that over the last few years Poland as a whole has become the new Florida, death metal spewing left, right and centre from Warsaw to Krakow and beyond. Though Behemoth are death/black veterans, since 2001 the band has been given the perennial "big shot" on our shores via signing with Olympic/Century Media. And the band has made good on industry belief, pushing the boundaries of what aggression taken form through instrumental maneuvering is all about. When it comes right down to it, Zos Kia Cultus' cool comes not only from its down-tuned double-bass rumbling, but as a result of thrashy bits sprinkled here and there, in line with the last Vader but not as overtly so. Things are thunderous in Behemoth land, and the sounds of oppressive silence are as dead as ever.

David Perri8

KAMELOT

Epica (Sanctuary)

Although Epica is the first studio platter under the Sanctuary banner, it's the sixth overall, but to be fair, really just the third since the breakthrough, The Fourth Legacy. The album comprises 16 bits total, though not all are songs. Some are merely soundbites or brief instrumental interludes, moving this musical adaptation of Goethe's Faust along. The Floridians (plus Norwegian singer Roy Khan) have employed a host of guest appearances, including Rhapsody guitarist Luca Turilli on 'Descent Of The Archangel' and Elegy's Ian Parry (whose Consortium Project Thom Youngblood has been a frequent contributor) on 'Dawn'. First heard on Karma, female vocalist Mari returns, singing lead on 'Helen's Theme', as well as bookending her efforts on the first proper tune 'Center Of The Universe', as well as the concluding 'III Ways To Epica'. The album is very polished, with Khan's silky voice rarely pushed above a reserved tone, even on the aggressive and aforementioned 'Descent' which, along with 'Farewell', is one of the few guitar-dominated tracks. After a rousing one-two kickoff, Epica becomes a much more brooding, emotional platter than most are used to, understandable given the subject matter. There's lots of ear candy throughout the record, filled with keyboards, symphonic instrumentation (particularly strings), and synthesizer amongst Youngblood's lone guitar. 'The Edge Of Paradise' opens with the multi-voiced choir of 'Opiate Soul', the first of four short intermezzos. 'On The Coldest Winter Night' is a ballad, and features Khan, atop sparse acoustic guitar, tempered drums, piano and synthesized strings. Believe it or not, 'Lost & Damned' trots out an accordion and concertina! Otherwise, it's a rollicking metal number. A worthy successor to the recent Kamelot lineage, and equally recommended for first timers.

Mark Gromen8

CROSS FIRE



STRATOVARIUS

Elements Pt. 1 (Nuclear Blast)



Admittedly I'm lost in the over-crowded power metal arena, but Elements I strikes a deep chord after overlooking the stale characteristics of the genre. The wishy washy and predictable first single, 'Eagleheart' (you don't get more blunt than this... although it took the band to #2 on the Finnish album charts!) takes us down the wrong path immediately, but it doesn't take long to shift gears as there is more on the bone than meets the eye. The album is an uplifting piece of work and surprisingly it is the epics that overcome with unusual integrity. 'Soul Of A Vagabond' has a menacing crunch as it clocks in at over seven minutes stalking to and fro with intense passion. The speedy 'Find Your Own Voice' and 'Learning To Fly' shows that the band still has chops and are willing to keep up with the neck-brace crowd. The near ten-minute 'Fantasia' begins with an annoying keyboard line but transforms into a Broadway movement with images of Queen swirling in the orchestral clouds. The trembling epic 'Papillon' (French for butterfly) is particularly striking as front-man Timo Kotipelto takes the reigns while guitarist Timo Tolkki gracefully guides the listener through a tale of inner peace. The unnerving peak is the title track, 12-plus minutes of grandiose metal that gracefully segues into a 'Drop In The Ocean' which closes the record off in a mellow manner (both Timo's excelling with overbearing melodies and lush back-grounds) as the soothing waves roll inward and outward, your mind falling away like sand in an hourglass. Therapy at its finest...

Tim Henderson7.5

So, the highly anticipated return of Finland's premier neo-classical export is upon us, and it's an amazing return in terms of both good and bad. On the negative side, Elements Pt. 1 starts off with perhaps one of the most useless bits of Strato-filler ever put to tape called 'Eagleheart', rehashing every bad up-tempo, melodic and lyrical idea guitarist Timo Tolkki ever had. The album ends on a sour note as well with 'A Drop In The Ocean', a happy-happy-joy-joy acoustic-led wannabe folk ballad that does not fit into the scheme of things by any stretch of the imagination. Sandwiched between these two loser bits, however, is some brilliant material, with Tolkki taking a step back to the band's more progressive Dreamspace days without losing his "do ya wanna go faster" vision of more recent years. The pompously titled 'Soul Of A Vagabond' leads the charge in earnest with an anthemic

crunch not heard from Stratovarius' Episode album, hinting at the changes afoot within the band's sound. There are in fact four songs on this nine track outing that exceed seven minutes (including 'Soul'), 'Papillon' being a very classy ballad, 'Fantasia' a huge symphonic piece that tries to do everything and goes nowhere, and 'Elements' as the album's 12 minute cornerstone, this last one easily the band's most ambitious work to date. Have no fear, though, there are two impossibly fast scorchers to be had as well, the humorous instrumental 'Stratofortress' which features the ultimate Tolkki/Jens Johansson (keys) trade-off, and 'Learning To Fly', the fastest tune the band has ever recorded (and it still clocks in at 6:19!). One of Stratovarius' better albums, hinting at bigger and better things to come even if it does start off in the lamest of lame-ass ways.

Carl Begai7.5

This is the masterpiece that Timo Tolkki warned all Strato fans not to download? After last year's Hymn To Life solo embarrassment, you'd expect the bandleader to cling onto any fans that are left listening to Stratovarius' bombast-on-overdrive metal. Everything you either love or loathe about these Finns is back: the soaring, melodramatic vox ('Learning To Fly'), the riffery than leaves only Yngwie straight-faced ('Eagleheart'), and keyboards that make Stratovarius sound like an old-school video game soundtrack ('Find Your Own Voice'). If my problem was squarely with the symphonic power metal Stratovarius presents, then I'd be unfairly biased from the start. But, amongst the maelstrom of activity that constitutes Elements Pt. 1, you also have very thin sounding production, the guitars buried amongst robotic-sound drums and those stupid, ridiculous, irritating synths. And another thing, who comes up with the song titles? I understand that English might not be Strato's first language, but recognizing cheesy stupidity is a universal ability.

David Perri5

OSI

Office Of Strategic Influence

(InsideOut America)

Advance press of the players involved in this didn't hold much promise. That is, until Pain Of Salvation's Daniel Gildenlow was replaced with Central American swami Kevin Moore. Then all bets were off and so was OSI, into the murky dreamscapes of Kevin's mind, led by his world-weary voice, his disconnecting politics and his more than choice keyboard eccentricities. OSI is essentially a Chroma Key album (thank God: more of those are needed) backed up by a full band of blinded-by-scientists. The backing consortium, essentially Mike Portnoy and Jim Matheos, thankfully seem as fed up and bored with progressive metal as Moore famously is, Moore darting from Dream Theater when their

music looked to him as no more than "a series of parts." Moore is all this album would have needed to sound fresh, odd, curious, cold, lonely, isolated, fiercely artistic. But Matheos' near obsession with Porcupine Tree helps as well, the band reinforcing by having Stephen Wilson along for a lyric and a lead vocal on 'shutDOWN' which moves repetitively and uneasily like a cynical Porcupine mantra. Gordian Knot bassist also adds to the finery, playing fretless bass against Portnoy's tasteful maelstrom. All told, OSI is progressive rock for some layer of prog intelligence (still thin) above the basement apartment Hobbiteads that frequent today's synthetic and contrived spider-fingered scene. In that respect, this is as revolutionary as it is purely pleasurable.

Martin Popoff9

NIGHTINGALE

Alive Again! The Breathing Shadow Part IV (The End)

Dan Swano returns three years hence with the fourth installment of his loosely-wound Breathing Shadow concept and the picture just gets brighter, stranger, more enigmatic. Dan's band has solidified into a touring unit and indeed Swano says that Nightingale now will get his full commitment. Still, this is very much a Swano vision. The man's Lande/Coverdale-like voice and the keyboards (shared by Dan and his brother Dag/Tom) dominate, IV sounding like a hard rock version of GTR, Steve Hackett, Asia, Morse-era Kansas, Hairsnake, Hairhair, '90s Styx and '90s Saga. In simple terms, it's plush, dynamic, beautiful... pomp rock at the hard edge of the lost art. As well, there's a smoky, foggy Porcupine Tree mystique to the thing, Dan's northern roots and his vast death past casting an ethereal pall on the unflapping, unflappable jewel box of surprises. Faves would be the stomping 'State Of Shock', which collapses into a chorus worthy of Alan Parsons and the next track 'The One', which is a giddy gem of dated keyboards and idealistic prog rock melodies. The two tracks together bookend the general thrust of the rest of the album: this is essentially a canny, self-aware, highly skilled record in the spirit of prog rock from the searching, shifting early '80s version of the form on through all the big production tricks utilized through the early '90s dead-stopped by the rise of grunge. And the best part is that the ship is commandeered by an underground metal insider, which is why both mellow Nightingale and mellow Opeth are always going to seem "cool."

Martin Popoff8.5

ABORYM

With No Human Intervention (Code666)

To coincide with singer Attila Csihar's arrest for drug possession, the now reigning kings of cyber-industrial-necro-black metal unleash what is clearly their most accomplished, meticulous, and monstrous release to date surpassing their last valiant effort, Fire Walk With Us. Earth-shattering walls of sound mercilessly envelopes the listener, where layers and layers of effects, programming, distortion, symphonics and heaving-like guitar emissions of pure grimness simply wall to create a nightmarish world of terror that goes much beyond the man vs. machine concept, more like the machine possessing man, in a world where evil takes a new form within the very heart of the digital age. Out to tell the many tales of terror, Attila gives his best performance since Mayhem's immortal De Mysteriis release; his harshly operatic screams and wails of sinister vibrato add to the overall aura of unparalleled atmosphere. Also along for the ride, cameos made by Nattfrost (Carpathian Forest), Irrumator (Anaal Nathrak/Frost), Matt Jerman (Void) and Bard Faust (ex-Emperor/Dissection) who supplies some lyrics. Nonetheless, With No Human Intervention could signal a paradigm shift within the harsh and grim realm of black metal, possibly taking it where it has never gone before. To call this post-black metal (a typical term these days), would be kind of limiting. To call Aborym one of the best black metal bands on the planet would be more suitable.

Chris Bruni9.5

SOLACE

13 (Meteor City)

Meteor City is plugging 13 as an album "fans of Down, Audioslave, COC and Soundgarden must hear." The Pepper Keenan comparisons are valid but Solace is nothing at all like Chris Cornell. Kyuss and Monster Magnet is a closer match, for both the music and vocals. Psychedelic doom and riffing slugging with the inevitable

Sabbath foundation, Solace offers vibrant grooves for burnt out ears. Nothing that hasn't been done before, and try as I might, the image of Dave Wyndorf grows larger with each song. Two covers are included: 'Forever My Queen' by Pentagram and 'With Time' by Agnostic Front. Wino (The Obsessed, Saint Vitus, Spirit Caravan) makes a guest appearance, doing vocals and guitar on 'Common Cause'. Keith Ackerman (The Atomic Bitchwax) plays drums on 'King Alcohol' and 'Sled Heavy'. Further populating the already crowded stoner rock section, Solace is worthy of their spot, but they aren't quite catchy enough to lead the parade. A true fuzz rock specialist, guitarist Tommy Southard rarely breaks for a mellow moment, opting instead to go full-out most of the time. The hidden track 'Shit Kisser' is worth hanging around for as it's full of energy with a dirty vibe. Mention of the artwork must be made, a painting by artist Paul Vismara that is one of the best album covers seen so far this year.

Aaron Small6.5

NIGHT IN GALES

Necrodynamic (Skyscraper)

That's pretty cool that Canadian up-and-coming indie label Skyscraper managed to scoop the latest release from Swedish thrashers Night In Gales. But fans of the band's previous works will be slightly stumped at what awaits inside the cool packaging here: there is still an element of the melodic Gothenburg thrash the band did so damn well on previous slabs, but it's being overcrowded by a more raw, punk-ish, straight-ahead death 'n' roll vibe. Imagine newer Entombed mixed with, uh, Load-era Metallica with a bit of melodic Swedish fuzz in there and you're getting close; throw in some oddly out-of-tune sung vocals alternating with the more standard scratchy growls and a lot of those combined-words that the band is known for and it might start making sense. Actually, no, it just gets more confusing. It's pretty smoking stuff, but gone are the memorable melodies of past, replaced by a shoot 'em down attitude and a streamlined sound, more aggressive than hook-laden, more Motorhead than In Flames.

Greg Pratt7

DIONYSUS

Sign Of Truth (AFM)

For lovers of modern power metal, pure and unaltered, Dionysus will float boats, given the baroque guitar intricacies set to speedy, confident, hero rock structures. Production is co-handled by Tobias Sammet (Avantasia/Edguy) and the in-demand Tommy Newton and as expected, each frequency is laid out in crystal-clear, fidelity manner. Dionysus is a bit of a supergroup, with guys from Nation being joined by Olaf Hayer, front man for Luca Turilli as solo artist, and a drummer from kicking posts Sinergy. The music mostly gallops down the true path of the middle, but on the edges, there's an adventurous ballad, some prog and some hair metal, making for at least a modicum of adventure not exhibited in the band name, record title, cover art, or production. It doesn't get any cleaner or more professional, but then again, borderline symphonic metal fans might find this a mere contributor to an already bulging glut.

Martin Popoff5

MERAUDER

Bluetality (Century Media)

It's kind of hard to take this band's politics seriously when the last song on the record is an ode to underground chicks with pink hair and piercings; however, if you're into the whole raging against the system Bluetality might just be your calling card. Taking issue with the fascist cops of New York City, the brutal pigs of New York City and, err, all those bad police officers in New York

City, Bluetality comes off as a one-dimensional attack. Yeah, the band's pissed off at the fuzz, but it all gets lost in the muddy production and borderline Southern/harder Zakk Wylde vox, while titles like 'Mr. Righteousness' and '41 Shots' seem almost thrown in for those in the know, and those only. This is fast and aggressive, but there are so many bands pulling off this Gothenburg-meets-Hardcore sound. And y'know what? Hardcore is two years too late, with metal now as well getting sick of Maiden 2002 melodies over screeches, and young, anti-everything core-moshers only picking up on At The Gates (italics)now/(italics). This is stale despite the claim of anger and revolt and, by the way, songs about girls using the growl vocals ain't gonna get you any.

David Perri6

ANIMAL

900 lb. Steam (Perris)

Featuring ex-W.A.S.P. guitarists Chris Holmes and Randy Piper, Animal is a rather curious moniker as Holmes is said to be distancing himself from all things W.A.S.P. Blackie Lawless wasn't kidding when he said Chris is into the blues now. This nine song album is quite laid back compared to the material we're used to hearing Holmes rip on, although the boys have been unable to shake their '80s roots. The rest of the band includes Frank Garisto on drums, Burn Coldey on bass and Rich Lewis on vocals. Lewis sings with an especially raspy, deep-throated voice while Coldey really gets a booming sound out of his four-string. The production is barely beyond demo quality, but that appears to be the intent as the entire project seems to be about old guys just happy to play, not caring about finer points. Barely out of the rehearsal room, 900 lb. Steam will satisfy the curiosity of old W.A.S.P. fans but will never enter the charts. The title track is probably the heavi-

est/fastest of the bunch, and it's not that exciting. 'Pissed Off' doesn't really live up to its name while 'Never' is a soft-hearted ballad with nice acoustic work that gives way to a half decent electric solo. The police sirens and gunfire on 'Another Victim' are overly dramatic in this tough guy tune. 15 or 20 years ago, Animal would have made much more of an impact, today they're relegated to smoky biker bars on Saturday nights.

Aaron Small7

ENTOMBED

Sons Of Satan Praise The Lord

(Music For Nations)

As a stop-gap between Morning Star and their forthcoming studio record due out in May, this 2CD set will no doubt keep fans content with the sheer amount of material amassed, giving us an accurate idea of where their roots lie. For Entombed lunatics, a good chunk of the 27 cuts found within are a true find. 'March Of The S.O.D./Sergeant D and The S.O.D.' (S.O.D.) and 'Kick Out The Jams' (MC5) are blinders written purposely for the band as the sonic Swedish attack is seething. The rather shocking 'One Track Mind' is an obscure gem from Motorhead's brilliant Another Perfect Day, whereas the Misfits-esque take on the tradition version of 'Amazing Grace' is comical shred - the second version on CD2 sees frontman L.G. Petrov pissed to the gills and vocals in mellow mode. Although previously available on the Black Jujy EP, 'The Ballad Of Hollis Brown' (Bob Dylan) and 'Lost' (Jerry's Kids) are standout cuts, albeit the source is stupefying. Meanwhile 'Scottish Hell' (Dead Horse) and 'Satan' (The Dwarves) are just plain mean 'n' nasty. 'Bursting Out' (Venom) was pulled from the To Ride, Shoot Straight And Speak The Truth session and closes with the first minute of the legendary epic 'At War With Satan'... dying to hear the final 19 minutes lads

Tim Henderson7.5

RARITIES

NASTY SAVAGE

Wage Of Mayhem (Crock'd Records)

As the press kits say, before Death, before Obituary, Nasty Savage was "the" band from Florida. Well, I wouldn't go that far, but nonetheless these guys did leave many a listener in traction from head-snapping releases of the 1980s. The more things change, the more they stay the same. The latest from Nasty Savage is actually the original four tracks from the Wage Of Mayhem demo from 1984, along with two new tracks. The two new tracks on Wages would not be the least bit out of place on the original demo. For an indication, cross early '80s Metallica thrash with the doomy riffery of a Witchfinder General. Depending on your technology tolerance Wage will thrill or kill your sonic senses. If you can recall the trashcan quality of the old Ebony label stuff you'll be right in focus as to where this one is coming from. Nasty Ronnie delivers the same snarly vocal performance with the occasional high-pitched yelp thrown in for good measure. Raw, old school thrash, nothing more, nothing less. Look for a new full-length later in the year.

Allan Grusie6

BLACK SABBATH

Symptom Of The Universe

1970-1978 (Rhino/Warner)

Designed by Rhino's top flight designers, this 29 track comp of the Sabs' Ozzy years stands as the best intro (at the two CD level) to the band's seminal run of nine albums before a seaisk Ozzy fell off the ship at sword point. Musically, the key move is the inclusion of the band's early hit, a cover of Crow's 'Evil Woman', included on the UK version of the debut but not the North American. Elsewhere, every heavy song from Master Of Reality is here, as well as too many from the debut, both ballads (?) from Vol 4, 'Fluff' instead of 'Killing Yourself To Live' from Sabbath Bloody Sabbath (shame), and then a spotty though grudgingly adequate sampling of the final three. The rub's really in the 48 page booklet, which is stuffed with rare photos and a fairly fresh liner essay from the eminently qualified Mick Wall, who also extracted colourful quotes from the band. Worth at least a tenth of the price for the page 33 shot of Geezer alone.

Martin Popoff6.5

Life In Black

THE RED KING

Vitreolum (Dark Symphonies)

Exceptional dark neo-classical ambient from Corvus Corax mastermind Johann Bran Cleerman, Vitreolum is a haunting and introspective listening experience that's quite stirring, the four tracks laid out in epic proportions. Musically, this threads the fine line between the oxymoronic minimalistic grandiosity, basically being tangible but at the same time otherworldly. Kinda reminds me of a more restrained and accessible version of French neo-classic act Elend, them being somewhat of an acquired taste. But what Mr. Cleerman has conjured here is something of strong purity, will, and potency, also reflected in the excellent digipak artwork and presentation.

Chris Bruni8

DISSENTER

Apocalypse Of The Damned

(Cold Blood Industries)

Scathing Polish death metal of a high quality, Dissenter take their influences from the right places (i.e. Morbid Angel, Immolation, Nile, Krisiun), pushing the right buttons (or lashing out the right chords with overbearing firepower) to create a worthy death metal package that one can only expect from the potent death metal scene of the band's eastern European home. Strong production, strong performances all around (it never lets up for a second, constantly barraging the eardrums without remorse), an above average death metal release that's worth a shot for those who thirst for some new blood.

Chris Bruni7.5

EXMORTEM

Pestilence Empire (Osmose)

This Danish death metal force unleash like never before with their latest release (their Osmose debut). Pestilence Empire is an album that paints quite the intense and lashing picture. Through nine tracks of blistering warped fretwork and demented time changes within the venomous straightforward assault, this serpentine strike is a pleasure that kills. Definitely one of the better bands from this neck of the woods, Exmortem not only succeed in keeping it intense on a credible and skillful level, but also manage to keep things exciting, fresh, and energetic.

Chris Bruni7.5

DIABOLICAL

A Thousand Deaths (WVWIII)

It's not too difficult to pinpoint this young Swedish beast's taste for the neo-thrash movement (still trying to decide if I should use this term lightly), but this talented breed surely know how to put on quite the display. Definitely on the more death metal side of the spectrum than The Haunted, Defleshed, or Witchery (even though references to said acts can be found scattered within), with very strong production to boot (it was recorded in Studio Underground for those who want to know), the album is the product of a band that has toned and honed its skills. And man that guitar wanking is sweet, to the point where Diabolical are very much beyond the typical of the Swedish death neo-thrash movement. Diabolical have quite the surging potency.

Chris Bruni7.5

VILE

Depopulate (Unique Leader/Listenable)

Along with Excommunion and Harakiri, Vile are undoubtedly one of the best new forces in underground death metal. Even though this Bay Area death machine have been around for seven odd years (and they were actually supposed to sign with Relapse), it is not until now that they are making their presence known. Depopulate (this being their second full-length album) is an epitome of what a credible brutal death metal release

should encompass. Technical and clearly skillful, blending in the styles of the masters (i.e. Carcass, Suffocation, Morbid Angel, Cannibal Corpse) into one tight package with excellent production that screams to be devoured, Vile are just that. Lyrically, Depopulate is not your run-of-the-mill all-out gore splatter platter, but it does bring up pertinent issues with easy-to-grasp prose while at the same time, not forcing out any kind of message (ala the overrated Misery Index). Nevertheless, with the right push, things could be quite promising for this excellent death metal outfit.

Chris Bruni8

ENTER CHAOS

Dreamworker (Metal Mind)

Poland's Enter Chaos (featuring members from notable death metal bands Behemoth, Devilyn, and Dies Irae) have created an album that takes the aggressive melodic death metal genre to a cool new level. With exceptional performances all around, this endeavor will surely be eaten up by those who constantly bathe with the Swedes. But Enter Chaos have created something much more noteworthy than a lot of the bands who play this style. Mixing the fine elements of the entire At The Gates catalogue (they even do a swell cover of 'Cold'), touching on elements from mid-to-latter-day-era Death along with the power of early Arch Enemy and latter-day Carcass, what we have here is one entertainingly scathing listening experience. Surely ambitious, but not too pretentious, hailing from a land which is known for the more brutal and darker death, this new outfit will surely make an impact given the right push and exposure. Oh yeah, and their singer is a female.

Chris Bruni8

GORELORD

Zombie Suicide Part 666

(Season Of Mist/Coffin)

The horror-filled sophomore effort courtesy of the solo project of Frediablo (Necrophagia/Deicide/Wurdlak) is another horrid unholy feast that's as vile, sly, and sinister as the Jeff Goldblum character in David Cronenberg's The Fly during his metamorphosis. But this monster continues its deadly trek, Frediablo becoming the master of the crushing riff, which if you have listened to his other works, is becoming one of his very strong traits. More eerie, atmospheric, moody, and even darker than the Force Fed On Human Flesh debut, this simple but effective death metal platter is just like watching your favourite cult (there's that word again) gore/horror film: not as epic as a Dawn Of The Dead, not subtle like Halloween, not ambient like Suspiria and not as silly as the early Sam Rami or Peter Jackson flicks. More or less a crazed-out, fiendish and frenzied vibe like any Fulci flick, with the slight unease of any Cronenberg film pre-Dead Zone, but packing that firepower of a Sam Peckinpah climax.

Chris Bruni8

ALLFADER

From The Darkest Star (Rage Of Achilles)

This wicked Norwegian unknown can easily fit in with the new necro wave of black metal (Anaal Nathrak, Aborym, and Frost, amongst the leaders in this movement). Not really having that Nordic-like feeling, Allfader's brand of coldness comes in the form of a pure, calculated, piercing madness, cerebral, yet clinically vicious and scalding. Even though there is quite a measure of ensuing madness (like the aforementioned bands portray to the utmost degree), Allfader do like to ornament it up a bit, with either the odd melodic spurt or the odd guest appearance with a clean vocal spurge or a female vocalist. These latter traits do not take away from the overall chaos as Allfader are one of those essential underground treasures certainly worthy of investigation.

Chris Bruni8

BARATHRUM

Venomous (Spinefarm)

The Six Feet Under of black metal are one of the more produced-sounding black metal bands out of Finland and certainly one of the more lackluster acts of said region as well. Alongside fellow Finnish bands like the lame Gloomy Grim, these Satan-mongers like their black metal basic, straightforward and very to the point. A steady pace is once again brought forth through all the tracks (see the early Samael releases), this new album even detracting from their last effort Okkult, as this output is devoid of any excitement, fire, and atmosphere, plodding along through a myriad of standard mid-paced riffs, turgid drumming and pseudo-evil shrieks. Your best bet: stick with Samael's Blood Ritual and Ceremony Of Opposites, 'cos this is about as evil as Six Feet Under trying to be brutal.

Chris Bruni4.5

LACRIMAS PROFUNDERE

Fall, I Will Follow (Napalm)

This German gothic metal band embodied quite the appeal with their last two releases, almost displaying themselves as Germany's answer to Anathema without the layers of cheese that can be found within 99% of said gothic metal scene. I guess the more "urban" approach (the album cover and artwork says it all) with Fall, I Will Follow was expected, the band opting to take the more darkened "rock" approach, akin to what My Dying Bride did with that 34.78% album (although not as experimental), what Anathema dish out today (not as dreamy or memorable) and what Sentenced are doing (not as blunt). It could have been worse, but somehow that appeal is still there, given the band's good production and the basic hard-driven song writing. At least it's better than the garbage that To Die For or Tiamat belch out.

Chris Bruni6.5

AURORA BOREALIS

Time, Unveiled (Diehard/Nightsky)

Piercing death/black metal from this U.S. act centred around guitarist/vocalist Ron Vento (drums on this are handled by ex-Hate Eternal's Tim Yeung), Aurora Borealis offer a chilling and viciously executed opus that displays an impressive technical fortitude. Each song pretty much follows the same kind of pattern, with the production being a tad on the muddy side; no big deal really as musical showmanship is quite evident. But at the end it's just that: a fine death/black metal effort that capitalizes on each previous release, incorporating influences from Death's Human release (from what I hear anyway) to cold, but not grim black metal.

Chris Bruni7

NEGURA BUNGET

'N Crugu Bradului (Code666)

Maybe the quasi-uniqueness of this wicked black metal act stems from the fact that they actually come from the depths of Transylvania. It was evident with past releases that this enigma's style of black metal was quite mystical and haunting, atmospheric and chilling, but with 'N Crugu Bradului, Negura Bunget have reached their shining moment. With four tracks (clocking in at over 50 minutes) which represent a concept surrounding the four seasons (the four aspects of immortality told from the point of view of a mere shepherd, examining two dimensions: temporal and atemporal), this ambitious undertaking captures many wonders, musically and thematically. By combining haunting and chilling black metal soundscapes with folk and atmospheric intricacies, this vast journey is massive, mysterious and intriguing.

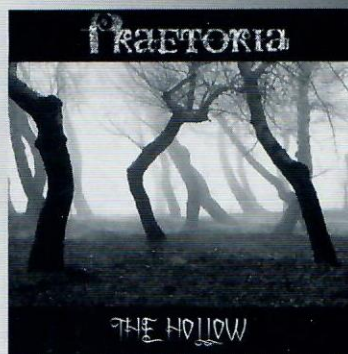
Chris Bruni8.5

PRAETORIA

"...SONGS ARE FULL OF ENERGY, POSSESSING WONDERFUL DYNAMICS. WELL WRITTEN AND LOVINGLY CRAFTED..."
BW&BK: 8/10

"...COMPOSITIONS THAT SKILLFULLY WEAVE IN AND OUT OF AGGRESSIVE PASSAGES MUCH AS DEFUNCT BLACK METAL VETERANS EMPEROR ONCE DID..."
UNRESTRAINED: 8/10

"...MELODIC, TECHNICAL, PROGRESSIVE...IS ONE OF THOSE BANDS THAT CAN INTEREST LARGE CROWDS OF METALHEADS..."
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BATHORY

Nordland I (Black Mark)

Bloody 'ell, talk about (m)old school. The elusive and reclusive Quorthon creeps back with an album of panoramic yet claustrophobic Viking metal that creaks like a chain mailed soldier of doom riding high atop weathered maritime planks. Slogging grimly from plodded track to track, Nordland I is in a class of its own, for who would dare make metal so doddering, belaboured and ill of tone? Fact is, Quorthon owns this patch of land by default, the man defiantly out of touch with modern production and yet determined to mine an odd soundtracky realm, all the while using his plain singing voice barely a whisper above a grumble and a mumble. Slow, frigid and dark, Nordland I will either strike you as a laughable mess of artistic mistakes unknowingly cast in bad taste, or the wily, purposefully organic and bog-static rantings of a mind shuttered in his Northern drawing room. Note: after talking to Quorthon about the album and it's sound, the man said that the hoary vibe is a deliberate reaction to the reception of the cleaner, more technical Bathory albums from the last few years, all that were lambasted in the press. This one's for the fans. Look for Nordland II, recorded at the same time, in about a month.

Martin Popoff7

ASGAROTH

Red Shift (Peaceville)

There's this big misconception out there that the '80s were the glory days of metal. I once naively believed that urban legend, but since late 2001 I've begun to see the complete error of my thinking, as creativity in the metal realm is currently at an all-time high. From subgenre to subgenre, bands are infusing, engaging, growing and pushing every boundary left, right and centre in order to create cool sonic collections that are kicking some serious ass. Combining epic, Viking-esque passages with futuro synth and cinematic soundtrack fare, Asgaroth's mindfuck of a record takes the spirit of Ulver's ambience and transmutes it over Cradle's gothic leanings and a Sisters Of Mercy-esque sense of despondence. I love the fact that so much metal is becoming harder and harder to categorize, and what's even cooler is that labels are willing and able to finance this divergence. For a quick synopsis of Red Shift's sound, check out the six-minute 'Buried', but if you want to give the album the due justice it deserves, also become immersed in 'Naked Eye's piano line-meets-double bass splendour, and the heaviest track on record, 'Sharpedge Solitude'. One no longer needs to mourn the long absences that dot Arcturus' output; Asgaroth is here to keep the flame burning.

David Perri7.5

SOULFORGE

Duality (Great White North)

Another solid release from Quebec, no surprise there. The surprise is that it's not extreme grind, but melodic Gothenburg-ish thrash. Damned if it's not done well too, just how it should be: catchy hooks aplenty with melodies that keep the songs planted in your brain, but enough aggression to please the more diehard headbangers out there. Although Soulforged aren't breaking any new ground in any way, this is quality modern metal. Heavy influences come in the way of, obviously, In Flames or At The Gates, and while Soulforged may not be up to the level of those bands yet, just give 'em another album or two. A couple of things though: the production is a bit limp for this sort of music, making the songs lack the punch they could have. Also, the album drags on a bit at 51 minutes. And man, that is some of the most brutal cover art I've seen since the '80s. So harsh looking it's actually great! Check www.gwnrecords.com for more info.

Greg Pratt7.5

GORDIAN KNOT

Emergent (Sensory)

This is the highly anticipated follow-up to the eponymous debut, a multidimensional musicianship-filled platter created by former members of Cynic, along with guests from progressive-minded acts like King Crimson, Dream Theater and the legendary, mesmerizing metal of Watchtower. On disc two, Sean Malone and Sean Reinert (ex-Cynic nucleus) have tapped Fates Warning's Jim Matheos and Genesis guitarist Steve Hackett to step in, alongside Bill Buford (drums, Yes/King Crimson/Earthworks) and former Cynic bandmate, and twin Cynic guitarists, Jason Gobel and Paul Masvidal, who round out the remainder of Gordian Knot. Like the debut, the eight inclusions are devoid of vocals, including even 'Grace', a live cut, which is essentially Malone solo on the Chapman stick. Despite the line-up, anyone seeking Cynic Mach II is advised to look elsewhere, as this is more akin to symphonic jazz (even moreso than the debut), or the '70s prog rock mastered by the various non-metal participants (see above), of whom I'm not a fan, i.e. soothing, spacey instrumentals. Paradoxically, the track entitled 'A Shaman's Whisper' is about as heavy/aggressive as the sound gets, verging on Dream Theater territory. Piano, which is utilized throughout Emergent, introduces the polyrhythmic 'Some Brighter Thing', while a long segment of 'The Brook The Ocean' sound like Malone alone, practicing his scales. Definitely something you need to be in the mood for, surely not a "rock out" album.

Mark Gromen7

PISSING RAZORS

Live In The Devil's Triangle

(Spitfire)

'Tis the season (past), so we're getting lots of useless live albums thrown at us right now. So if you've slogged through the double Lillian Axe (!), double Axel Rudi Pell (?), and Killer Dwarfs (!!), it's time to check out Pissing Razors, who have graciously only given us one disc. Still, it's such a waste of time to have live releases that sound just like the studio releases, from bands that have songs that pretty much all sound the same. And, hey, I like Pissing Razors, their unique brand of technical aggro-metal drawing a fine line between the Pantera of old and the nu of new, without getting too cheesy or overtly macho. The guys can play the hell out of their instruments too and write great material that alternates between simplistic moshcore to head-scratching tricky change-ups. Good band, kinda a one-trick pony, and a useless live album. Oh ya, this is the debut of the new singer, but you guessed it, it doesn't really make a difference. Actually, if no one had told you...

Greg Pratt4

JUDAS PRIEST

Live In London (SPV)

It was inevitable, I suppose, that the powers-that-be would follow up the Live In London DVD with a double live CD package, but considering that the last live Priest outing ('98 Live Meltdown) is only four years old and that Demolition stiffed in a big way, the stink of a cash grab can be detected a mile off. To make matters worse, even though there are more tracks on the CD than the DVD, 17 of the 25 offered appeared on Meltdown as well. So, pass the reeking plate of "who cares?" To top things off, the sound in comparison to Meltdown is noticeably inferior. It's quite pathetic, really, that such a respected institution could stoop so low, and you know damn well that Tipton and Downing are to blame, as they've been doing this music biz thing for far too long to have their strings pulled by a record label. It would have been far better if the band had gone in to record a couple of new songs (something in the vein of Demolition's 'Feed On Me' would have been cool, acceptable at the very least) and slapped 'em on an EP with some live cuts backing them up. Or, even better, leave well enough alone and

use the time and energy wasted on Live In London to write a new album that wipes Demolition from memory. It's sad when your heroes - particularly innovators like Priest - disappoint, a crying shame when they start milking the fans...

Carl Begai3

SIR HEDGEHOG

Sir Hedgehog (Abstract/Lunastone)

Forget about Audioslave, the best Chris Cornell performance of 2002 comes courtesy of Sir Hedgehog's Jonas Fairley's dead-on Soundgarden wail on this self-titled debut record. These Vancouverites are cool for a lot of reasons, though many of us have only heard of this particular knighthood due to HevyDevy Townsend's ringing endorsement. Somehow finding a way to make stoner rock exciting, engaging and important again, Sir Hedgehog is a testament to the riffs, the vibe and the buzz that rides paramount, kinda like Fu Manchu without mainstream aspirations, and sounding totally in line with a happy Sabbra Cadabra, but not at all evil. Like the feeling you get right as you hop in the car before going downtown with the buds on a Saturday night, Sir Hedgehog makes sure f-u-n is injected back into thick power chords that scream vinyl, and has you wishing the turntable was still in the old school basement rather than next to the modern computer, dig? Rawkin' with reckless abandon, Sir Hedgehog is going to be making noise for a long time to come.

David Perri8

RAUNCHY

Velvet Noise (Nuclear Blast)

With a terror ethic that reaches back to Killing Joke, Ministry and Godflesh, Raunchy bridge the old school of industrial with the new, most notably that of Fear Factory and Strapping Young Lad. Saddled with an unfortunate name that comes from the band being Danish and not exactly up on connotations, Raunchy is anything but, going for more of a smoothed out, tricked out, layered and floaty smear of power like Devin but with an alt.rock sense of song. As well, choruses are sturdy, memorable, almost Amorphis-like at times, these being recurring respites as the album slashes and crashes on. Add to that real drums, a sense of Swedish death, horrifically large guitar tones, and very real, distinct variations between songs, and Raunchy becomes more than a worthy newcomer to the loud machine rock scene.

Martin Popoff7

ABLAZE MY SORROW

Anger, Hate And Fury (No Fashion)

Been a while since the Swedes issued anything new and the intervening years have seen a flood of products from their countrymen. Needless to say, Ablaze My Sorrow have to make up for lost time, and they have with 11 speeding, death metal choices, varying between aggressive old school and a more modern bent, all with excellent production values. 'Where The Strong Live Forever' slows down, to a deliberate, Gothenburg pace, while 'Heartless' and the electronic-modulated vocals of 'Paradies' veer toward catchy, death 'n' roll. 'Thou Shalt Forever Suffer' is really nothing more than a 2:23 sound effects/voiceover prelude to 'Shrouded Are The Pleasures Of Flesh'. At 40 minutes, a bit short by today's standards, Anger, Hate And Fury lives up to the title.

Mark Gromen6.5

SINNER

There Will Be Execution

(Nuclear Blast)

And so Mat Sinner carries on. Another day another death, another year another Sinner album, such are the banalities of life. "I'm fired up!", Sinner will exclaim. "This is my best album ever, and I'm feeling and playing better now than I did when I was 22!" The man will then invariably

ably discuss how this was truly a group effort and, for the first time (yet again), every one's individual influences are shining through to create the most contemporary, kick-ass Sinner record to grace metal. Sometimes you've got to wonder what the point of re-hashing old, tired ideas really is; I mean, Mat is one of the main guys in Primal Fear, the '00s' most infamous Judas Priest cover band, and he certainly shows no shame in that shindig. So, Sinner's known for riffs, you say? I suppose the riffs on this old/new record can't be faulted. They're cool, some speedy, some with lots of groove, some slower and more experimental and, as is completely expected, you've got a track called 'Locked & Loaded' to complete the proceedings. Bottom line: 57 channels and nothing on.

David Perri5

ORATORY

Beyond Earth (Limb Music)

A real pity about the name of this band, 'cuz unless you're familiar with the band's first album the assumption is that Oratory is a progressive metal band. Nothing could be further from the truth. The female-fronted Portuguese quintet - they sacked their male singer following the debut - serve up some pretty impressive melodic power metal in the vein of Nightwish, Yngwie Malmsteen and Helloween and of a quality unexpected from such a young outfit. Produced by Rebellion/ex-Grave Digger guitarist Uwe Lulis, Beyond Earth neatly sidesteps a lot of the typical 200bpm technical flash that bands cropping up in Spain and Portugal have become known for, focusing instead on big, fat, lush guitars (no surprise there), tasteful keyboards and striking vocal melodies. It's this last point that makes all the difference in the end, with singer Ana Lara giving a performance that puts many current female vocalists to shame; she sounds like Lacuna Coil's Christina Scabbia and is about two albums away from joining her and Nightwish's Tarja at the top of the heap. Definitely worth checking out if you're a fan of intelligent top tier power metal.

Carl Begai8

KROKUS

Rock The Block (WEA Switzerland)

Hmmmm. Original frontman Marc Storace has rejoined forces with longtime axe Fernando Von Arb and the long-awaited reunion album hits #1 in Switzerland, their homebase (although Storace is Maltese). A comeback no doubt deemed an enormous success, yet you won't likely see this record picked up in North America anytime soon. Overall, Rock The Block sparkles more than the ice on the Swiss Alps and it's just as dangerous - credibility-wise that is. Sadly the record emerges as a polished, latter-era Mutt Lange offering with lifted "DC riffs aplenty and a slew of should-be extinct rock clichés. Okay, yes, probably saying the band have been lifting Young Riffs since their early beginnings in the late '70s... correct. Some things never change. Not as sad as Leppard's current output, but even the sell-out Blitz shines next to this. You'll be running for cover when the similar tempos of 'I Want It All', 'One For All' or 'Raise Your Hands' take hold. Still love Storace's (self-produced) vocals and Headhunter ranks pretty damn high in my book, but old age hasn't helped the once-potent Storace/Arb combo. It's time for a PERMANENT change of address.

Tim Henderson3

MARK BOALS

Edge Of The World (Frontiers)

Between touring, writing the new Dreamtower record for Ring Of Fire and recording vocals for the Genius rock opera, singer Mark Boals has managed to squeeze out a solo album, and a pretty decent one at that. Unlike his last solo outing (which ultimately spawned Ring Of Fire), Edge Of The World has Boals steering well clear of the neo-classical little Italy (say it five times fast and it becomes a Malmsteen lick) sound

he's become associated with, going instead in a more progressive/melodic direction. With guitarists Tony MacAlpine and Jeff Kollman in tow, Boals is in good shape and more than capable of making this a credible effort. The first three tracks, 'Fly', 'Lady Babylon' and 'Taking Control' show off Boals' considerable vocal range and his ear for progressive metal, 'Between Two Mirrors' taking the opposite tack with the band bringing on the funk with a meaty, chunky groove. Funny, but this album actually feels like a stripped down version of Dream Theater's *Awake* in places, sorta like what that album would have sounded like without Mike Portnoy and a more rock-oriented direction. The only time Edge Of The World really falters is on the two AOR chick tracks 'Through The Endless Night' and '(Hold On) To Our Love', identified as cheese by title alone (although the latter does have a Malmsteen-gone-commercial feel to it). A decent listen, almost preferable to Boals' work with Ring Of Fire.

Carl Begai7.5

ULVER

Lycantropen Themes

Original Soundtrack (Jester/The End)

Talk about transformation. What was once a Norwegian black metal band of the highest calibre now incorporates sounds and, more appropriately, soundscapes usually found only in the realm of trip-hop or dark, ambient electronica. But to linearly classify Lycantropen Themes within a category would be a disservice to band and fan alike. Ulver is doing something progressive here - not progressive in the sense of Dream Theater or Yes, but progress in light of taking auditory bursts of energy called sound and allowing this coagulation to represent the darkest and most morose elements of humanity. There is no conventional song structure on Lycantropen Themes, and rightly so. The emotional spectrum that accompanies our day-in-day-out is a fluid element, with no measure of rigidity nor structure that underscores or supersedes itself. The radio-pandering mainstream delusions of Portishead or Massive Attack? Not found here, for that pseudo-art house intellectualism has no place in judging the character or true human sadness, despondence and desperation inherent in Ulver's work. When the last 20 seconds of the un-named track three become the initial minute of track four, the true sublime, epiphany-inducing power of music is reached. Very rarely can artists capture this sixth sense.

David Perri9

DUSHAN PETROSSI'S IRON MASK

Revenge Is My Name (Lion Music)

Doing my first double take looking at band photos inside the sleeve. Belgian guitar virtuoso Dushan Petrossi is damn near a spitting image of a younger Yngwie Malmsteen. The credits refer to Malmsteen as "spiritual brother"...hmmmm. Do another double take as the music takes flight. Mike Vescera-era Malmsteen immediately comes to mind. Now depending on your point of view this can only go very good or very bad, nothing between. We'll go with the latter. A phenomenal guitarist, Petrossi has a knack for writing very catchy melodic power metal. Every track is full of Malmsteen-like runs and riffs, all very tasteful and not overbearing; heavy as hell in so far as neo-classical metal goes. Vocalist Phil Letawe is an excellent choice. Too often, releases from shredders come with poorly thought-out vocal choices often including using their own talents (or lack thereof). Letawe would match up favourably with any of the lengthy roster of Malmsteen vocalists, but I find him more in the Vescera range. Keyboards by Youri DeGroote are of the typical ballerina metal style. As per the norm for the genre there are five instrumentals (12 tracks in all) but each is diverse in style. Only one track, the ballad 'You Are My Blood' could be classified as weak. Artwork is terrific as well.

Allan Grusie8

STAR OF ASH

iter.viator (The End)

Along with Ulver, Star Of Ash is leading the New Wave of Metal Boundary Pushers that find themselves mostly on The End Records or the Elitist brand. The individuals who puts these records together are of high metal pedigree (Star Of Ash is fronted by Heidi Tveitan of Peccatum fame and Trickster G. from the aforementioned Ulver), but they are also people who realize that bullet belts and tuned-up-to-C power chords represent only the aggressive element of darkness. Darkness is a two-pronged beast with despondence being the other half, and that's mainly what Star Of Ash specializes in. Employing seedy electronic elements underneath hazy melodic functionalism or mid-paced acoustic dirges, iter.viator is an experience in the Fight Club syndrome: reality is delusional, confrontational, abrasive, confused and un-natural. Star Of Ash is tapping into a tripped-out need in the metal world, even if those who cry "Black Fuckin' Metal!" won't understand.

David Perri8

RUNNING WILD

Live (GUN)

The careers of Rock N Rolf Kasperek mirrors that of his equally long-running German countrymen, Grave Digger singer/founder, Chris Boltendahl. While both remained unwavering "heavy metal" in the face of countless trends, their bands have not only survived, but continue to grace the largest festivals around the globe. Similarly, both have just issued live albums/DVDs as their former labels clean out closets filled with older material. This pair of career-spanning discs, encompassing 18 tunes, was recorded on last year's The Brotherhood tour stop in Osnabruck. As such, all the between-song raps are in German. Although 25% of the material comes from the album they toured for, it's still essential Running Wild. Besides, as the band's detractors constantly point out, the music from album to album is virtually interchangeable. Like any live/best of disc, this is strictly for the connoisseur and no one else, as it offers a snapshot of a particularly moment, not some momentous retrospective. 'Prisoner Of Our Time', off the debut, 'Bad To The Bone', which is aired early on, and the 'Under Jolly Roger' finale are expected inclusions, but 'Blazon Stone' and 'Lead Or Gold' are something of a surprise. Only two tracks are reprinted from 1988's initial live opus, Ready For Boarding, but there's precious little in the way of photos and no commentary. Guess you'll have to get the DVD!

Mark Gromen7.5

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Metal-Rules.com Vol.1

(Metal-Rules.com)

One of the net's most respected metal sites chimes in with a massive 16 track sampler that reflects ably the site's hard power metal-to-thrash leaning. Otherwise known I guess as '80s speed metal if I may be so hazy with my power chord paintbrush. All sorts of rarities and unsigned material is on offer from all over America, Scandinavia, even Russia (Rest In Pain - bizarre prog death) and Chile (Fahrenheit - well-recorded heavy hair metal), with a big drop in quality plaguing the back third of the disc, the demo ghetto as it were. Destined to be one of those comps with all sorts of tracks (or versions) that never make it to proper release, this weighty comp is an interesting survey of the site's vision, with half the material working effortlessly as metal worth listening to for head-banged pleasure, rather than mere curio factor. Note: even though there are helpful but brief liner notes enclosed, the comp comes to life with the extensive background info provided o'er at the site.

Martin Popoff7

ROCK IN A HARD PLACE

SUPARED

Supared (Sanctuary)

After a pair of solo records under his own name, former Helloween frontman, Michael Kiske, returns to the band format, as Supared. All but one of the 14 tunes on the debut were penned (wholly or in part) by Kiske. While hoping ONE of Sanctuary's old fogies rooster would redeem themselves, Supared is yet another disappointment. While still rock, of a mainstream Soundgarden meets Mayfield 4/Ours variety, it certainly won't see the Helloween faithful jumping for joy. Mid-tempo and emotive, Kiske wisely avoids the stratospheric voice for which he's best known, although occasionally, as on the piano-begun ballad, 'Ride On', it slips out. On 'That's Why', he's accompanied by a lone acoustic guitar and electronic effects. The material is radio-friendly, but anyone who still listens to FM undoubtedly knows there's a complete dearth of new guitar rock. Sadly, that sums up what Supared are all about.

Mark Gromen3

PAUL GILBERT

Burning Organ (Mascot Records)

Make sure your tongue is planted firmly in cheek listening to the ex-Mr. Big/Racer X guitarist's new solo album. There's plenty of the guitar wizardry that Gilbert is known for to be found, but it's surrounded by songs that feature Gilbert playing a ridiculous amount of fun. Lead track 'I Like Rock', for example, is an inane two minute punk track, 'Friday Night (Say Yeah)' is a '60s love ditty a la Paul McCartney, 'Amy Is Amazing' is pure, shameless worship of The Who, and 'Muscle Car' is his blues rock "I'm a bad ass" song; all of 'em a far cry from anything he's done with Racer X, way better than anything he did with Mr. Big. Gilbert does give his fretboard a workout on the momentous 'My Religion', the TM Stevens-flavoured soul stomper 'My Drum' and a cover of Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love', so people who think that Gilbert has lost his mind upon hearing the opening track need not fear. High point of the album has to be 'I Am Satan', a song about the devil in the throes of love that would make the Barenaked Ladies green with envy. On top of all this, it turns out that Gilbert has a voice perfectly suited for soulful rock, more than capable of carrying a whole album. This is one of those albums you'd love to hate, but it inevitably finds its way back to the CD player.

Carl Begai8.5

KINGDOM COME

Independent (Ulfone - Germany)

During the late '80s and early '90s Kingdom Come was a band that caused quite a stir by releasing efforts that aped the mighty Led Zeppelin, earning them the slang name Kingdom Clone. The following years have seen all band members turn over at least once, a string of mediocre hard to find releases and a last man standing, of sorts. Vocalist Lenny Wolf is now the sole member of Kingdom Come with Martin Langer contributing on drums. While many critics have compared Wolf to Robert Plant in the vocal department, I've always found him a merger of Plant and a rockin' Lawrence Gowan. So as writer, musician and producer, how might Lenny Wolf fare on Independent? Pretty well actually. Well over half of the tracks rock out. There are no blazing guitar solos, but the man is more than capable as evidenced on the acoustic track, Forever. Sure there is more than a nod and wink towards Zeppelin's direction, but Independent is hardly a clone job. An enjoyable listen from start to finish. Wolf needs to give consideration to dropping the Kingdom Come moniker altogether. Independent would have been an excellent platform to transition to a true solo artist.

Allan Grusie7

SLAV SIMANIC

Let It Go (Now & Then)

Slav Simanic is a Toronto musician who unquestionably knows and understands every piece of the fretboard. In 2000, he released the mostly instrumental 'Water Of Life', which is included here as a bonus disc. Going in chronological order, the songs on 'Water Of Life' are sort of your typical guitar-shredding stuff, with Christian readings throughout; nothing overly noteworthy. 'Let It Go', on the other hand, does have a few impeccable moments that are strengthened by the addition of Phil Naro on vocals. Naro sounds striking on 'I'm Going Up Higher', reaching towering notes and showing his strengths as a vocalist. While 'You're Never Gonna Die' may be your typical epic power metal fare, 'People Say' is a touching, dramatic ballad. 'See The Light' shows the force of Naro's voice once again, one that I can attest to as I have seen the man perform live several times. The typical neo-classical guitar performance found in 'The Message Of Three Angels' does not impress this jaded reviewer, however the heaviness of 'The Fallen Angel' is quite surprising. While this may not be a tremendous release, it does indicate great possibilities if the Simanic/Naro relationship can focus more on song structure rather than guitar work.

Mike Drew7

SOUTHERN STORM

1999 (Bonus Film)

It's getting harder these days to find prog metal bands that keep their focus on songwriting rather than using a constant display of fireworks to keep the listener interested. Southern Storm's chosen a different path, and the final result is deeply rooted in '70s hard rock without sounding dated or cliché. The CD kicks off with the middle eastern-flavoured title track, which is strongly influenced by early Rainbow, so it's no surprise the powerful vocals are reminiscent of Dio and Bonnet. 'Wake Me Up' is an infectious track that could do well as a single. 'Out Of Time' and 'Elegy' tastefully dwell in power ballad territory, while 'Fire' has a mid-tempo approach reminiscent of Malmsteen's classic 'I Am A Viking'. The whole album is full of haunting melodies and memorable choruses that will no doubt garner the band international attention. On a small negative note, the cover artwork doesn't do justice to the timeless quality of this rather impressive debut. The CD also contains five bonus tracks sung in Bosnian. You can learn more about the band by visiting www.southernstorm.net.

Brave Pilgrim8

LOST WEEKEND

New Religion (Now & Then)

Hailed in high regard as a great new British hard rock band similar to Thunder, Lost Weekend have quite the reputation in the AOR press. While 'Who's The One To Blame' may open on a hard rock note, Lost Weekend lacks the blues influence which would justify a Thunder comparison. The Hammond organ taking 'Can't Get You Out Of My Mind' is a nice touch, but 'Sophia's Song (My Shining Star)' is the shining star on New Religion. Brilliant, the song transcends limits placed on the AOR genre with its Eagles acoustic quality and subtle words. Clichés are found in the title track and 'Dead In The Water' however, but to those who like their AOR with lyrics about women and the trouble they may cause to the male gender, they may not notice. 'Once In A Moment' is the strongest rocker on the album, and the ending acoustic strains of 'I'm Not The One', close the album on a subdued note. This seems like a band that needs to be captured live, not held up in a studio to be overblown with production.

Mike Drew5

VISUAL VIOLENCE

MANOWAR

Fire And Blood (SPV)

A two DVD set from what surely must be the most fan-friendly band on the planet (!). The first disc is the second part of the Hell On Earth video, chronicling the band's tour through Europe in '98. Rather than simply film any one concert, Manowar filmed them ALL, with several cameras, ranging from camcorder video to top quality film. A variety of shots are employed, in front and behind the band, the audience, extreme close-ups and full panoramas. 'Blood Of The Kings' utilizes a letterboxed split screen. Most of the onstage antics were shot in colour, while the interview footage (surprisingly almost devoid of Joey DeMaio) is often in black and white. Ten complete renditions are performed, including atypical choices, like 'Hatred', 'March For Revenge' and 'Master Of The Wind'. In between, commentary and montages of clips, from different songs, are interspersed. Every country has some time onscreen, with each tour stop represented. Manowar playing Abba's 'Voulez Vous' in France is rather funny, while 'The Gods Made Heavy Metal' is a compilation of the moments when a male and female fan are plucked from the audience, to demonstrate their talents. For 'Army Of The Immortals', the band isn't visible at all. Instead the camera parades through tattoos Manowar have inspired. The interview portions can be subtitled in seven languages and the first disc's bonuses include backstage stuff with the crew, the recording session for the French version of 'Courage' and 'Thor', as played in Murcia, Spain. Disc number two features a dozen cameras for the prestigious Monsters Of Rock, in Brazil. On that September night, Manowar played (killed?) 13 songs, before the outro music, 'The Crown And The Ring' signaled the end of the show. Bonuses here include interviews with the extended family,

like longtime soundman Jeff Hair and journalist Vincent Cecolini, who wrote the liner notes for the CD reissues. Three additional live bits, with 'Warriors Of The World United' and 'House Of Death' dating back to just last year, offer even more value. All total, there is more than four and a half hours of Manowar, at the highest sound and visual quality. At a bargain price, it's just too good to pass up.

Mark Gromen10
(All Men Play On Ten)

NAPALM DEATH

Punishment In Capitals (Snapper)

Centered on a benefit concert for S.H.A.C. - Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, Napalm Death deliver a ferocious 90 minute gig at the University Of London. Filmed April 27, 2002, the set list is 28 songs long. Full of intensity the band give it their all, despite numerous stage divers, several of which long overstay their welcome. Dedicating 'Vermin' to The Royal Family, vocalist Barney Greenway is a bundle of energy while six-stringer Jesse Pintado is an unflinching tower of grinding guitar. The camera crew perfectly captures the aggressive vibe with a good mixture of close-up and full-stage shots. A 45 minute documentary follows Napalm from soundcheck to the moment they step onstage, featuring serious, honest, one-on-one interviews with each of the members except drummer Danny Herrera who is obviously camera shy. Extras include two songs filmed live in Tokyo, Japan, 1996, neither of which is included in the London concert. The Tokyo footage is rather grainy with a bootleg sound quality. Up next are six songs from Santiago, Chile, 1997. Performed in front of a much larger crowd, the sound is slightly muffled. Click on the eyes for hidden vintage footage of the band play-

ing a TV sound stage, without an audience. Complete with full colour, eight page booklet, Punishment In Capitals is devoid of the drunken buffoonery included on so many other DVDs. It's Napalm Death at their best - live.

Aaron Small8.5

ARMORED SAINT

A Trip Thru Red Times (Metal Blade)

As a huge adjunct to the original video version released in '91, A Trip Thru Red Times nabs two production videos from the Symbol Of Salvation period of the band, that '91 album being one of Slagel's favourite records of all time and a beautiful career highlight of his whole Metal Blade saga. Both are solid songs with 'Reign Of Fire' getting a live treatment and 'Last Train Home' being filmed on and around a train. Other extras include a quickly evolving and entertaining photo gallery, four more live vids and best of all, a full one hour interview with the band, interspersed with rare photos, best being their make-up eras as kids! This is pretty hilarious, especially the beginning bit, where they talk about getting together in Joey's garage (man, these guys have been buddies since EARLY elementary school!), playing tennis racquet and "keyboard table" renditions of Pink Floyd and Queen songs and blowing off smoke bombs. Their crowd consisted of one buddy, to which they gave a tour program and made a hot dog. All the bonus stuff is helpfully placed in the Bonus Room and indeed, the whole thing is very professionally assembled and easy to use. The impression one gets is of a long career with many costume changes, and many great songs which blasted profoundly live while suffering on record.

Martin Popoff7.5

OVERKILL

Wrecking Everything

An Evening In Asbury Park (Spitfire)

Herein lies a double DVD for the OverKill fanatic, consisting of the entire, two hour titular concert (reported in BW&BK #60), recorded March 2002, on the initial disc, with a 85 minute documentary, photo gallery and a short behind the scenes segment on the second. The documentary was filmed in 2000, in the studio, during the recording of Bloodletting. While DD Verni and Bobby Blitz Ellsworth provide most of the commentary, both drummer Tim Mallahre and guitarist Dave Linsk are afforded some "face time" as well. While the interview was previously available on VHS, distribution was sparse, especially outside the US, so now fans have it on DVD. Featuring tons of footage from past line-ups, live and off-stage, it traces all aspects of OverKill history and includes rare bootleg clips of unusual song selections, like 'The Rip N Tear', 'God Like' and even 'Blood Money', as well as the standards. A short-haired, post-op Blitz was man enough not to worry about his shorn tresses or reconstructed nose, both plainly visible on tape. Moving, often off-balance camera angles and a variety of settings prevent the lengthy piece from becoming stale. The rarely seen promotional video for 'Fast Junkie' is also included. The picture gallery is predominately leftovers from Asbury Park and the last European tour. It's a little disconcerting clicking through each page, multiple photos on each, without musical accompaniment, particularly when the first disc offers animated menus, but the array of photos, whether posing with fans, detailed close-ups of tattoos or live stills are different from the typical array of old record company promo photos.

Mark Gromen8

SPOCK'S BEARD

Don't Try This At Home/The Making Of V (InsideOut)

If you're a Spock's Beard fan, this 300 minute double DVD package is a must-have. If you're a music fan - never mind prog rock vs metal vs radio friendly pop rock - you'd be wise to check this out as well, 'cuz you'd definitely learn a thing

or three about true musical talent. Disc 1, Don't Try This At Home, was recorded live in Tilburg, Holland in 1999 on the Day For Night tour, embodying a five camera shoot that captures The Beard at its off-the-wall best in front of a packed house. Prog rock fans in general will wet themselves with glee at the caliber of the performances and the wide selection of material; there is simply nothing not to like. 'In The Mouth Of Madness', the Eagles-flavoured acoustic piece 'June', the epic 'The Healing Colours Of Sound' and the Spock's masterpiece 'The Light' are only four of 12 brilliant performances, the Peter Gabriel-era Genesis meets The Beatles meets Billy Joel meets Queen sound coming off just as well on video as it does on audio. Disc 2, The Making Of V, is a two hour look behind the scenes of said album, singer Neal Morse taking us through the process from beginning to end, much of it with his own hand-held video camera. Something to bore the pants off the merely curious, valuable insight for the hard core Spock's Beard fan. As for bonus material, there are several special live bits spliced together, including an in-store performance of 'The Doorway', a cover of 'Space Truckin', a live cut of 'June' with a Dream Theater-type special guest, and a decent amount of clowning around. A fine release, made all the more special in light of Neal Morse's recent departure, the man's musical genius forever preserved on film. A poignant ending to one Spock's Beard chapter, hopefully not the last we'll see or hear from them.

Carl Begai10

CANDLEMASS

Documents Of Doom DVD (Escapi)

It's a shame this double disc set is only available in the PAL format, but those with a DVD drive on the computer might want to check out this collection of live and backstage footage, from the early days right up until the end of 2002. The first disc is the '90 Stockholm gig preserved as a live CD for Metal Blade, back in the day. While the entire show never made it to North America, it's here now. A multi-camera shoot, the 75 minutes encompasses 13 tunes, although some of the best known/favorites are absent ('Crystal Ball' and 'Mirror, Mirror' being notable exclusions). Someone looking for the definitive live audio collection would do well to investigate the recently issued Doomed For Live - Reunion 2002. The second disc is infinitely more satisfying for long starved Candlemass fans (like myself, although the hunger has been somewhat sated by seeing the Swedes twice, last year). All told, it's an 80 minute Documentary Of Doom, as they call it, taking the viewer on a journey, from the reformation, back to the first show, in '87 and all the highlights in between. The letterboxed performance footage is interspersed with band shot camcorder footage. The four segments from last year's festival appearances comprise nearly half the disc, then they run through older clips - of lesser quality, which is no surprise given the expense and lack of consumer electronic at the end of the '80s. On the extras menu, there's the usual: biography, discography (both of which are repeats from disc #1) and an image gallery. While it operates without clicking the mouse, and is accompanied by music, the gallery is nothing but still shots from the previous disc. What ultimately makes Documentary Of Doom a winner is the commentary track, where Leif Edling, Messiah Marcolin and Lars Johansson watch the entire presentation along with you. Like a metal version of the old Mystery Science Theater 3000, the three crack jokes and embarrass each other, while also providing insight into what's onscreen. The rare 'Night Of The Witch' is performed and the discussion about how the pressures of emerging thrash acts like Metallica and Exodus affected the band onstage and off, is great stuff. Put it on the surround sound, big screen plasma television and do a little doom dancing, as that's as close as we're liable to get to a live Candlemass performance over here anytime soon!

Mark Gromen9

HMV

Top 20

- 1) MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM)
- 2) OPETH - Deliverance (Koch)
- 3) KAMELOT - Epica (Noise)
- 4) QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE - Songs For The Deaf (Interscope)
- 5) DISTURBED - Believe (Warner)
- 6) SALIVA - Back Into Your System (Warner)
- 7) BLOODBATH - Resurrection Through Carnage (Century Media)
- 8) IRON MAIDEN - Edward The Great (EMI)
- 9) KORN - Untouchables (Warner)
- 10) STONE SOUR - Stone Sour (Roadrunner)
- 11) IN FLAMES - Reroute To Remain (Nuclear Blast)
- 12) LACUNA COIL - Comalies (Century Media)
- 13) CANNIBAL CORPSE - Worm Infested (Metal Blade)
- 14) KATAKLYSM - Shadows & Dust (Nuclear Blast)
- 15) SATYRICON - Volcano (EMI Norway)
- 16) FORSAKEN - Arts Of Desolation (Century Media)
- 17) SPIRITUAL BEGGARS - On Fire (Music For Nations/Koch)
- 18) NIGHTWISH - Century Child (Spinefarm)
- 19) TAPROOT - Welcome (Warner)
- 20) PARADISE LOST - Symbol Of Life (Koch)

the BRAVE UNDERGROUND

By Aaron Small

The Brave Underground uncovers the world of unsigned and unheard bands, as well as giving constructive criticism and/or deserving praise to the starving musicians who submit their CD's to our hungry ears. Music (please include two copies of the demo and band bio if possible) and all pertinent info can be sent to BRAVE WORDS & BLOODY KNUCKLES, c/o The Brave Underground • 368 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1S5

SOLVI - SOLVI

PO Box 90565 Nashville, TN 37209 USA

Online: www.solviband.com Email: solvi@solviband.com

Energetic, post-Seattle rock in the same neighbourhood as My Sister's Machine and Gruntruck. Given the current crop of big name rock bands (Nickelback, Theory Of A Deadman, Puddle Of Mudd, etc.) the time is right for Solvi's shot at the heavy-weight title. Ballys and infectious, the bar has been raised. The simply titled 'Tree' is aggression release sure to be recommended by therapists nationwide. Sweat-drenched songs full of integrity and ready for radio. The riff in 'Knuckleduster' will have arena crowds on their feet this time next year. Tapping nu-metal for its finest qualities and disregarding all the crap, this quartet has effectively bottled lightning. Hello labels - are you listening?9

WETWORK - New Start Human

1293 Ludlow Crt. Oshawa, Ont L1G 7L5 Canada

Online: www.wetwork.org Email: bryanmallon@hotmail.com

Managed to catch the last two songs of Wetwork's set when they opened for Arch Enemy in Toronto. That brief live experience was enough to impress, mainly due to vocalist Doc, real name Kristen Parker. Her screams and growls enticed the male members of the audience to leave the bar and approach the stage. Unfortunately the belligerent dynamic displayed in concert was not properly captured on CD. The mix needs to be clearer. As it stands, vocals dominate while guitar, drums and bass are confined and competing. Technically proficient, Wetwork are predominantly death metal with progressive styling. Their diverse songwriting and admirable stage presence should land the band many more highly coveted opening slots.7

FLATBLAK - A Dragon's Tale

219 - 5404 10th Ave. SE Calgary, AB T2A 5G4 Canada

Online: www.geocities.com/hell_link/flatblak.html

Email: hell_link@yahoo.com

The singer was everything. In BW&BK #50 (May 2001), Flatblak scored 9/10. Since then original vocalist Gord has left the fold and guitarist Mikel has stepped behind the microphone, with disastrous results. Sounding like Cookie Monster doing death metal inside Oscar's garbage can, Flatblak are destined to flat line. A new bass player is also on board. Musically the Danzig influence is still present. Samples ranging from Cheech and Chong to Satan's automated voice mail are heavily relied upon; a crutch used to aid the painfully weak lyrics. Admittedly "ganja-fueled," this six song EP is nothing sort of ugly. Pledging allegiance to the Devil will not save their sorry souls; eternal suffering awaits.3

INFINITY MINUS ONE TALES FROM THE MOBIUS STRIP

77 Princeton St. Suite #2, East Boston, MA 02128 USA

Online: www.infinityminusone.com

Email: infinityminusone@bigfoot.com

Originating from the Berklee College Of Music, IMO "combine classical music, film scores and video games in a rock context." That is really nothing to write home about. Electronic progressive spirals much like Dream Theater collide with Pink

Floyd. Annoying falsetto vocals directly follow the psychedelic keyboards through arrangements aimed at showcasing what these guys learned in school. Thinking man's metal? Not quite. Self produced and engineered, the sound quality shows that these pupils have a few more years to go before graduation. Operatic endeavors that really try to overawe but are lost in their own maze of creative nonsense.5

ABUSE - Like A Virgin

Online: www.abusemusic.net Email: BigPimp@abusemusic.net

"Recorded in four basements and a loft." No shit! There's no way anything recorded in a proper studio could sound this bad. Extreme, sadistic underground death/gore metal with lovely song titles such as 'It Dripped Out Of Her Ass', 'Carnage For The Elderly' and 'There's Something About Rape'. Even with the aid of a lyric sheet, it's impossible to decipher OffalConsumer's gurgled vocals. The artwork is riddled with pictures of naked women in various degrees of bondage and torture along with several firearms. How nice of these four heathens to dedicate the album to your mother. Cannibal Corpse and Mortician know what they're doing. Abuse is lost amongst piles of porn and deluded fantasies.2

EMOTIONAL FLATLINE - A DRUG CALLED HB

Online: www.emotionalflatline.com

Email: emotionalflatline@hotmail.com

Considering the fact that Emotional Flatline is also the name of a Carcass song, one would expect a grind-influenced band. In actuality, vocalist TJ is a dead ringer for Phil Anselmo, just not as powerful, while the music is a mix of Pantera, Megadeth and Sepultura/Soulfly. Each track is heavy and pounding but completely unoriginal. Not impressed with the handwritten white sheet inside the jewel case that reads, "Cover artwork unavailable now as well as the other six songs." The seven minute Cartman impersonation ending 'Driven' was completely unnecessary and not at all funny, while the instrumental guitar outro reeks of Creed. The label interest the band speaks of is hard to believe.6

AFTERSHOK - Unfinished Business

444 Crosby Cr. Canonsburg, PA 15317 USA

Online: www.aftershok.com Email: GeorgeM@aftershok.com

Two full pages of thank you lists but no track listing. A collage of band photos but no song titles - wtf? Obviously big fans of Quiet Riot, Brighton Rock and Killer Dwarfs, Aftershok call themselves "Classic Metal" which really means stuck in the '80s. Vocalist Vic Hix used to front Shok Paris, (did you catch the pun?) who released three albums on MCA. Guitarist George Mihalovich provides riffs and solos sure to thrill any hair metal fan. The obligatory power ballad, which helped define this genre, is surprisingly absent. However we are treated to the sound of a Harley Davidson. Harkening back to the good ol' days, this is the soundtrack of tight clothes and tons of make-up, although the band really aren't that pretty.7

SPIN - Cell 46

169 St. Mary A. Ganu St. Birkirkara BKR 06 Malta

Online: www.cell46.com Email: spin@cell46.com

Brash, bold and in your face, Spin are caustic noise-mongers

much like Misery Loves Co. Setting new stakes of severity, this industrial metal riveted with samples and programming crushes the cities that have rebuilt since they were last obliterated by Strapping Young Lad. Lead shouter Simon Deguara takes his cue from Max Cavalera, managing to register a previously unseen score on the Richter scale. Exhaustive moshing comes to an abrupt and unwanted halt with 'Migraine', a techno/rave/dance number that is completely out of place. Don't know what the boys were thinking with that one. Otherwise, Cell 46 is a sonically intense, well-recorded album full of adrenalin guaranteed to unleash the fury.8

RAMPAGE - The Arrival

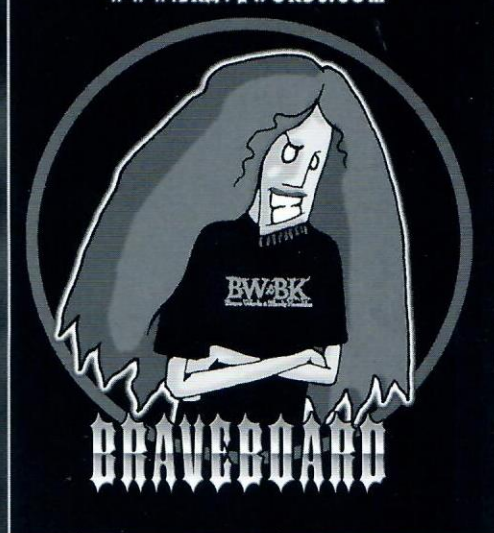
PO Box 41202 - 4141 Dixie Rd. Mississauga, Ont. L4W 1V5 Canada

Online: www.rampageworld.com Email: band@rampageworld.com

Not to be confused with the German or American bands from the '80s that used the name Rampage, this Rampage is Canadian and features Patrick Mulock from Eidolon on lead vocals. Broad in scope, the metal performed by these masters of their craft is calculated, progressive and full of syncopation. The unfolding of each song is quite dramatic. 'Reagan's Dream' starts it off with chugging guitars. 'Bloodline' (which the band has filmed a video for) thrives on bruising virtuosity. Awaken from the slumber of tiresome musical tirades and enjoy a band that knows when to be gritty, when to shine, and when to elegantly outplay the competition. With six multifaceted compositions, with another six on the way, Rampage is running wild.7.5

We Live For Metal!

WWW.BRAVEWORDS.COM



UNEARTHING the UNSIGNED!

metal forecast

The following schedule reflects North American street dates. Overseas release dates are specified by country of origin. Some of the following releases are available in other territories at an earlier date than listed.

Legend: (re) - designates a catalogue title reissued; (re + ?) - reissue plus specified bonus tracks; (L) - live CD; (Digi) Digipack; (Box) - Box Set; (LP) - vinyl; (PLP) picture disc vinyl; (OST) - soundtrack; (V) - VHS video; (DVD) - Digital Video Disc, (PV) - PAL Video; (ROM) - CD ROM; (SAD) - Super Audio Disc.

JANUARY

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 3 | YNGWIE MALMSTEEN | Concerto (CD/DVD) | Steamhammer |
| 13 | DEFECATION | Intention Surpassed | Nuclear Blast |
| 13 | SINNER | There Will Be Execution | Nuclear Blast |
| 13 | JUDAS PRIEST | Live In London | Steamhammer |
| 14 | STAR OF ASH | Iter/Viator | The End |
| 14 | ULVER | lyckantropen Soundtrack | The End |
| 14 | AMON AMARTH | Versus The World | Metal Blade |
| 14 | SYMPHORCE | Phorcefulhead | Metal Blade |
| 14 | GORDIAN KNOT | Emergent | Sensory |
| 14 | AXE | Nemesis (re) | Wounded Bird |
| 14 | AXE | Offering (re) | Wounded Bird |
| 20 | OLD MAN'S CHILD | In Defiance Of Existence | Century Media Europe |
| 20 | DRAGONFORCE | debut CD | Noise |
| 20 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | THIN LIZZY Tribute | Nuclear Blast |
| 20 | SAXON | The Saxon Chronicles | Steamhammer |
| 20 | ADRIANGALE | Feel The Fire (re) (+) | Z Records |
| 21 | DEEP PURPLE | Heavy Metal Pioneers (DVD) | Warner |
| 21 | KAMELOT | Epica | Noise |
| 21 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Contaminated 5.0 | Relapse |
| 21 | DEEP PURPLE | Heavy Metal Pioneers (DVD) | Warner |
| 22 | HALFORD | Forging The Furnace EP | JVC Japan |
| 22 | CONCERTO MOON | Life On The Wire | VAP Japan |
| 22 | DREAM EVIL | Evilized | Century Media Europe |
| 27 | SAMAE | Live At Summer Breeze (2-DVD) | Century Media Europe |
| 27 | SHADOWS FALL | The Art Of Balance (2-CD) | Century Media Europe |
| 27 | NEGURA BUNGET | N Cruga Bradului | Code 666 |
| 27 | ARTENTION | New Discovery | Frontiers |
| 27 | UNRULY CHILD | UCIII | Frontiers/Now & Then UK |
| 27 | URBAN TALE | Sign Of The Times | Frontiers/Now & Then UK |
| 27 | CANDLEMASS | Doomed For Live - Reunion 2002 | GMR Music Group |
| 27 | EDENBRIDGE | Aphelion | Massacre |
| 27 | HELLION | Will Not Go Quietly | Massacre |
| 27 | GOD DETHRONED | Into The Lungs Of Hell | Metal Blade Germany |
| 27 | INSANIA | Fantasy | No Fashion Sweden |
| 27 | STRATOVARIOUS | Elements Part I | Nuclear Blast |
| 24 | ANTHRAX | Safe Home (CDs) | Nuclear Blast Germany |
| 27 | ZIMMER'S HOLE | Bound By Fire (re) (+) | Virusworx |
| 27 | TYRANT EYES | The Darkest Hour | Scarlet |
| 27 | THE PROVENANCE | Still At Arms Length | Scarlet |
| 27 | JUDAS PRIEST | Sad Wings Of Destiny (re) | Snapper Classics |
| 27 | W.A.S.P. | W.A.S.P. (re) | Snapper Classics |
| 27 | BIOHAZARD | Kill Or Be Killed | SPV |
| 27 | MICHAEL MONROE | Watcha Want | Steamhammer |
| 28 | BACKDRAFT | Here To Save You All | Candlelight |
| 28 | GRAVE | Back From The Grave | Century Media |
| 28 | ETERNA | Tera Nova | Crash Music |
| 28 | UNEARTHLY | Infernum-Prelude To A New Reign | Crash Music |
| 28 | BLOOD RED THRONE | Affiliated With The Suffering | Hammerheart |
| 28 | SIX FEET UNDER | Double Dead CD (+ DVD) | Metal Blade |
| 28 | SOLACE | 13 | Meteorcity |
| 28 | RUSH | The Spirit Of Radio: Greatest Hits (1974-1987) | Mercury |
| 28 | BLACKMORE'S NIGHT | Past Times With Good Company | SPV |
| 28 | BLAZE | Silicon Messiah (re) | SPV |
| 28 | BEHEMOTH | Zos Kia Cultus (Here And Beyond) | Avantgarde Italy |
| 28 | ULVER | Madrigal Of Night | Avantgarde Italy |
| 28 | MASTERPLAN | Masterplan | AFM Germany |
| 28 | NOSTRADAMEUS | The Third Prophecy | AFM Germany |
| 28 | YNGWIE MALMSTEEN | The Genesis | Canyon Japan |
| 28 | KRISIUN | Live Armageddon (DVD) | Century Media |
| 28 | NAGLFAR | Sheol | Century Media |
| 28 | ABORYM | With No Human Invention | Code 666 |
| 28 | AGHORA | Formless | Code 666 |
| 28 | DIABOLICUM | The Dark Blood Rising | Code 666 |
| 28 | NEGURA BUNGET | N Cruga Bradului | Code 666 |
| 28 | NORDVARGR | Awaken | Code 666 |
| 28 | ASTROQUEEN | Into Submission | Crash |
| 28 | SPINECAST | Go Forth And Mutilate | Crash |
| 28 | NICODEMUS | The Supernatural Omnibus | Crash |
| 28 | QUEENSRÛCHE | Classic Masters | Dark Symphonies |
| 28 | ARENA | Contagion | EMI |
| 28 | TRANSATLANTIC | Live In Europe (CD/VHS/DVD) | InsideOut |
| 28 | RANDY COVEN | Witch Way | Lion Music |
| 28 | KELLY SIMONZ' BLIND FAITH | The Rule Of Right | Lion Music |
| 28 | TABOO VODOO | Something's Cookin' | Lion Music |
| 28 | ELIAS VILJANEN | Taking The Lead | Lion Music |
| 28 | CYRIL ACHARD | Confusion | Lion Music |
| 28 | IRON MASK | Revenge Is My Name | Lion Music |
| 28 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Warmth In The Wilderness II - Tribute... | Lion Music |
| 28 | POWELL YOUNG | 2065 Flying Fingers | Lion Music |
| 28 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | The Metal Zeppelin/The Music Remains... | Locomotive |
| 28 | PAGAN'S MIND | Celestial Entrance | LMP |
| 28 | FURTHEST ASHORE | Chronicles Of Hethenesse | Napalm |
| 28 | OBSIDIAN GATE | Nightspectral... + Colossal Christhunt | Napalm |
| 28 | RIVENDELL | Ancient Glory | Napalm |
| 28 | VINDSVAL | Imperium Grotesque | Napalm |
| 28 | ORDO DRACONIS | Wing & The Burden | Napalm |
| 28 | FLOODLAND | Decay | Napalm |
| 28 | CALEDONIAN | Acolyte | Napalm |
| 28 | MENHIR | Zluwari | Napalm |
| 28 | NATTVIND | Subuniverse | Napalm |
| 28 | VITAL REMAINS | Dechristianize | Olympic |
| 28 | IMPIETY | Kaos Kommand 696 | Osmose Productions |
| 28 | PENTAGRAM | Riders On The Storm | Peaceville UK |
| 28 | ANIMAL | 9010 lb. Steam | Perris |
| 28 | MICHAEL KELLY SMITH | Razamanaz | Perris |
| 28 | THE RAVENOUS | Three On A Meathook (MCD) | Red Stream |
| 28 | DEFLESHED | Royal Straight Flesh | Regain |
| 28 | KARMAKANIC | Entering The Spectra | Regain |
| 28 | OPUS ATLANTICA | Opus Atlantica | Regain |
| 28 | REPTILIAN | Thunderblaze | Regain |
| 28 | TENEBRE | Electric Hellfire Kiss | Regain |
| 28 | TIME REQUIEM | Time Requiem | Regain |
| 28 | GOREGOTTED | Mutilated In Minutes-Severed In Seconds | Relapse |
| 28 | SUBTERRANEAN SOURCE | Vivid Circles | Relapse |
| 28 | CYNIC | Focus (re) | Roadrunner Japan |

DEGREE ABSOLUTE
NIGHT IN GALES
DYING FETUS
MARC FERRARI

Degree Absolute
Necrodynamic (+ Sylphlike EP)
Stop At Nothing
Lights Camera Action!

Sensory /The Laser's Edge
Skyscraper
Relapse
Z Records

FEBRUARY

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| 3 | ANCIENT RITES | Live | Hammerheart |
| 3 | HAMMERFALL | Glory To The Brave (Deluxe Edition) | Nuclear Blast Germany |
| 3 | ZZ TOP | Chrome, Smoke & BBQ (Box) | Rhino |
| 4 | CALIBAN | Shadow Hearts | Prosthetic |
| 4 | ANTHEMON | Arcanes | Thundering |
| 5 | SLAYER | War At The Warfield (DVD) | American |
| 11 | STRAPPING YOUNG LAD | SYL | Century Media |
| 11 | CORPORATION 187 | Perfection In Pain | Earache |
| 11 | MORBID ANGEL | Altars Of Madness (re) | Earache |
| 11 | MADDER MORTEM | Deadlands | The End |
| 11 | OZZY OSBOURNE | Essential 2-CD | Epic/Sony |
| 11 | ARMORED SAINT | A Trip Thru Red Times (DVD) | Metal Blade |
| 17 | POISONBLACK | Escapexstasy | Century Media |
| 17 | THE HAUNTED | One Kill Wonder | Earache |
| 17 | NIGHTINGALE | Alive Again | The End |
| 17 | THUNDER | Shooting At The Sun | JVC Japan |
| 17 | CHILDREN OF BODOM | Hate Crew Deathroll | Motor Music Germany |
| 17 | DISSECTION | Live Legacy (CD/V/DVD) | Nuclear Blast |
| 17 | ORCHESTRA OF STRATEGIC INFLUENCE | O.S.I. | InsideOut |
| 17 | APOCALYPTICA | Reflections | Mercury |
| 19 | THE SILENT AGONY | Silence of Insanity | Thundering |
| 24 | MARDUK | World Funeral | Bloodawn |
| 24 | DARK TRANQUILITY | Live In Krakow (DVD) | Century Media Europe |
| 24 | LOST HORIZON | A Flame To The Ground Beneath | Music For Nations |
| 24 | ANTHRAX | We've Come For You All (+LP) | Nuclear Blast Germany |
| 24 | MOLLY HATCHET | Lock And Loaded | Steamhammer |
| 25 | CRADLE OF FILTH | Pandaemonaeon (DVD) | Metal Blade |
| 25 | MOTLEY CRUE | Greatest Hits (DVD Audio) | Rhino |
| 25 | SUPARED | Supared | Sanctuary |
| 25 | MOTLEY CRUE | Greatest Hits (DVD Audio) | Warner |
| 29 | MENIKETTI | Live | Avex Japan |
| 29 | KHYMERA | new CD | Frontiers/Now & Then UK |
| 29 | DISMEMBER | Where Ironcrosses Grow | Hammerheart |
| 29 | RUSTY COOLEY | Rusty Cooley | Lion |
| 29 | JOOP WOLTERS | Workshop | Lion |
| 29 | NAIL WITHIN | Nail Within | Listenable |
| 29 | DARKTHRONE | Hate Them | Moonfog |
| 29 | BEYOND DAWN | Far From Showbiz | Peaceville |
| 29 | CHARGER | new CD | Peaceville |
| 29 | KATATONIA | Brave Yester Days: A Kompendium | Peaceville |
| 29 | THE GATHERING | Souvenirs | Psychonaut |
| 29 | SEA OF GREEN | Chemical Vacation | The Music Cartel |

MARCH

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| 3 | SOULREAPER | Life Eraser | Hammerheart |
| 3 | ENSLAVED | Below The Lights | Osmose |
| 3 | SAGA | Silhouette (DVD) | SPV |
| 3 | VOIVOD | The Multiverse | Chophouse |
| 4 | THE OSBOURNES | The First Season (Uncensored) | Miramax |
| 4 | OPETH | Damnation | Music For Nations |
| 11 | THE HAUNTED | Caught On Tape (DVD) | Earache |
| 11 | CRADLE OF FILTH | Damnation And A Day | Epic/Sony |
| 11 | GOD DETHRONED | Into The Lungs Of Hell | Metal Blade |
| 11 | EVENT | Scratching At The Surface | InsideOut |
| 11 | EVERGREY | Recreation Day | InsideOut |
| 11 | 40 GRIT | Nothing to Remember | Metal Blade |
| 11 | MACHINE HEAD | Live At Brixton | Roadrunner |
| 16 | RUNEMAGICK | Darkness Death Doom | Aftermath |
| 17 | LULLACRY | Crucify My Heart | Century Media Europe |
| 17 | CARPATHIAN FOREST | Defending The Throne Of Evil | Season Of Mist |
| 17 | SAGA | Marathon | SPV |
| 18 | YATTERING | Genocide | Candlelight |
| 24 | ANNIHILATOR | Double Live Annihilation | AFM/The End |
| 24 | CARNAL FORGE | The More You Suffer | Century Media |
| 24 | SOLEFALD | In Harmonia Universali | Century Media |
| 24 | DRIVE SHE SAID | Real Life | Frontiers/Now & Then UK |
| 24 | BLAZE | As LIVE As It Gets | SPV |
| 25 | MORTIIS | The Smell Of Rain (remix) | Earache |
| 25 | CULT OF LUNA | The Beyond | Earache |
| 25 | THE HEAVILS | debut CD | Metal Blade |
| 25 | TOURNIQUET | Where Moth and Rust Destroy | Metal Blade |
| 31 | CIRCLE II CIRCLE | The Great Fall | Nuclear Blast |
| 31 | SUPERFLY 69 | Watching In Silence | AFM Germany |
| 31 | EMPEROR | Dummy Of The Day | AFM Germany |
| 31 | PERISHED | Scattered Ashes - A Decade Of Imperial Wrath | Candlelight UK |
| 31 | USURPER | Seid | Displeased |
| 31 | MARTY FRIEDMAN | Twilight Dominion | Earache |
| 31 | MAZE OF TORMENT | Music For Speeding | Favored Nations |
| 31 | DEVIN TOWNSEND BAND CD | The Unmarked Graves | Hellsawm |
| 31 | FERRIGNO, LEAL, KUPRIJ | Devin Townsend - Accelerated Evolution | HeavyDevy |
| 31 | MATTSSON | Promised Land | Lion Music |
| 31 | EVEREVE | Power Games | Lion Music |
| 31 | FATES WARNING | Enetics: 11 Orgys Of Massenjoyment... | Massacre |
| 31 | ALTARIA | The View From Here (DVD) | Metal Blade |
| 31 | NEIL TURBIN | Invitation | Metal Heaven |
| 31 | ENSLAVED | Theatrical Delta | Metal Mayhem Music |
| 31 | AUTOPSY | Live Retaliation | Metal Mind Productions |
| 31 | AUTOPSY | Mental Funeral (re) | Peaceville UK |
| 31 | DARKTHRONE | Severed Survival (re) | Peaceville UK |
| 31 | DARKTHRONE | Soulside Journey (re) | Peaceville UK |
| 31 | SKYCLAD | Blaze In The Northern Sky (re) | Peaceville UK |
| 31 | BLAZING ETERNITY | A Semblance Of Normality | Plastic Head |
| 31 | ABORTED | A World To Drown In | Prophecy Productions |
| 31 | GOATWHORE | Goremagaddon: The Saw And The Carnage Done | Reptile |
| 31 | SEVEN WITCHES | new CD | Rotten |
| 31 | BLACK LABEL SOCIETY | Passage To The Other Side | Sanctuary |
| 31 | | Broozed, Boozed & Broken-Boned (DVD) | Spitfire |

Steamhammer
Thundering
Thundering

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| QUEENSRYCHE | Queensryche EP (re) (+) |
| QUEENSRYCHE | The Warning (re) (+) |
| QUEENSRYCHE | Rage For Order (re) (+) |
| QUEENSRYCHE | Operation: Mindcrime (re) (+) |
| VARIOUS ARTISTS | Metal By Metal (DVD) |
| QUEENSRYCHE | new CD |
| LAMB OF GOD | As The Palaces Burn |
| CHIMAIRA | The Impossibility of Reason |
| TYPE O NEGATIVE | The Dream Is Dead |
| BATHORY | Nordland II |
| BAL-SAGOTH | new CD |
| LIDDELL, RUSH & THRALL | Lay Down The Law |
| DARK MOOR | new CD |
| STEEL ATTACK | new CD |
| ZYKLON | new CD |
| CIRCLE OF DEAD CHILDREN | Human Harvest |
| RAKOTH | Tiny Deaths |
| SEPSISM | To Prevail In Disgust |
| MICHAEL HARRIS | Hurricane X |
| SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN | Double Your Pleasure |
| DAVID T. CHASTAIN | Instrumental Variations (re) |
| JOE STUMP | Guitar Dominance (re) |
| EMPIRE | new CD |
| SECTION A | debut CD |
| VARIOUS ARTISTS | ULI JON ROTH Tribute |
| WINTERLONG | The Second Coming |
| M.O.D. | The Rebel You Love To Hate |
| SOILWORK | new CD |
| DARKTHRONE | Under A Funeral Moon (re) |
| DARKTHRONE | Transylvanian Hunger (re) |
| KATATONIA | new CD |
| BLACK LABEL SOCIETY | The Blessed Hellride |
| OVERKILL | new CD |
| VARIOUS ARTISTS | Best Of Both Worlds; VH Tribute |
| SEVEN WISHES | Code Of Honour |

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| CALLISTHEN CIRCLE | My Passion, Your Pain |
| HELLOWEEN | new CD |
| THERION | new CD |
| QUEENSRYCHE | Empire (re) (+) |
| QUEENSRYCHE | Promised Land (re) (+) |
| QUEENSRYCHE | Hear In The New Frontier (re) (+) |
| SINISTER | Savage Or Grace |
| GRAVE DIGGER | Rheingold |
| NIGHTWISH | new DVD |
| GORETRADE | new CD |
| DESTRUCTION | Alive Devastation |
| EVEMASTER | Wither |
| BALANCE OF POWER | Heathen Machine |
| ENTOMBED | new CD |
| MISERY INDEX | new CD |
| GREAT DECEIVER | Terror Incognito |
| RUNNING WILD | 20 Years In History (DVD) |

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| TIDFALL | Jaded |
| METALLICA | new CD |
| NEVERMORE | Enemies Of Reality |
| GLENN HUGHES | Songs In The Key Of Rock |
| TWISTED TOWER DIRE | Crest Of The Martyrs |
| SPINESHANK | Violent Mood Swings |
| DIMMU BORGIR | new CD |

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| RHAPSODY ASGAROTH | new CD Red Shift | LMP Peaceville |
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| MY DYING BRIDE | new CD | Peaceville UK |
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| | CENTINEX | Hellbrigade (re) (+) |
| | CENTINEX | Allesumaleficarum (re) (+) |
| | CENTINEX | Reborn Through Flames (re) (+) |
| | PECCATUM | new CD |
| | KEN HENSLEY | Born Again (re) |
| | KEN HENSLEY | Opamenko (re) |
| | KEN HENSLEY | Decadent Dozen (re) |
| | KEN HENSLEY | Mixed Messages (re) |
| | ...AND OCEANS | Dynamic Gallery.../Symmetry Of I (re) |
| | ARCH ENEMY | Burning Japan - Live |
| | BLIND GUARDIAN | new live CD |
| | BLIND GUARDIAN | new DVD |
| | BORKNAGAR | new CD |
| | CRYPTOPSY | None So Live |
| | EXTOL | new CD |
| | FINNTROLL | new CD |
| | FURY OF FIVE | This Time It's Personal |
| | GOD FORBID | new CD |
| | JAG PANZER | Live EP |
| | MERAUDER | Bluetalality |
| | MOONSPELL | new CD |
| | MOONSPELL | debut DVD |
| | SONATA ARCTICA | Winterheart's Guild |
| | SUBZERO | Black Snow |
| | TIAMAT | new DVD |
| | UNLEASHED | Where No Life Dwells (re) (+) |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Tribute To SLAYER - Vol. 1 & 2 |
| | ALEX MASI | Eternal Struggle |
| | KEKAL | new CD |
| | GEORGE LYNCH | DOKKEN/LYNCH MOB Covers CD |
| | HANDFUL OF HATE | Vicetrown |
| | UNMOORED | Indefinite Soul-Extension |
| | VOID OF SILENCE | new CD |
| | VILKATES | Apocalyptic Millenium |
| | MESS AGE | Self Convicted |
| | HEALING SIXES | Enormosound |
| | TWELFTH GATE | new CD |
| | EMERALD | Calling The Knights (re) |
| | NASTY SAVAGE | new CD |
| | ADVERSARY | new CD |
| | AVERNUS | Where The Sleeping Shadows Lie (re) (+) |
| | CIANIDE | new CD |
| | DECEASED | The Radiation Years |
| | PSYCHOMANCER | new CD |
| | ASTRIAL | Renascent Misanthropy |
| | ANIMUS MUNDI | new CD |
| | AUTUMN TEARS | Eclipse |
| spr. | MAUDLIN OF THE WELL | new CD |
| | DARK LEGION | new CD |
| | MERENDINE ATOMICHE | Walk Across Fire |
| | MACABRE | Grim Reality (re) |
| | STORMRIDER | new CD |
| | ILLDISPOSED | Kokallinum - Live |
| | KOLDBORN | The Embrace Of Thanatos - Live |
| | KONKHRA | Come Down Cold - Live |
| | DIM MAK | debut CD |
| | NOUMENA | debut CD |
| | STARGAZER | Invocation |
| | TRI-RYCHE | debut CD |
| | EVEN SONG | Man's 1st Disobedience |
| | HOUWITSER | Embrace Damnation |
| | INTERNAL SUFFERING | Supreme Knowledge Supreme (re) (+) |
| | MANEGARM | Havets Vargar |
| | MYSTIFIER | Tormenting The Holy Trinity (LP) |
| | NINNGHIZHIDDA | Blasphemy (re) (+) |
| | MESMERIZE | Off The Beaten Path |
| | DIE VERBANNTEN KINDER... | new CD |
| | SATHANAS | Hex Nefarious |
| | ALIAS EYE | Field Of Names |
| | HEAVEN'S CRY | Food For Thought Substitute (re) |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | DESTRUCTION Tribute |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | KREATOR Tribute |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | MORBID ANGEL Tribute |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | SUICIDAL TENDENCIES Tribute |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | VENOM Tribute |
| | ANATA | new CD |
| | CADAVER INC. | new CD |
| fall | CATHEDRAL | Metamorphosis (1990-1999 A.D.) |
| | DECIDE | new CD |
| | SOCIETY 1 | Exit Through Fear |
| | SPASTIC INK | Ink Compatible |
| | DISARRAY | Widespread Human/Bleed (re) (+) |
| fall | DREAM THEATER | new CD |
| | PANTERA | Pantera 4 (DVD) |
| | BLACK MASS | To Fly With Demons |
| | FARMAKON | debut CD |
| | FOREST STREAM | Tears Of Mortal Solitude |
| | EPHEL DUATH | The Painter's Palette |
| fall | WOLVERINE | Cold Light Of Monday |
| | IRON MAIDEN | new CD |
| | MENTAL HORROR | Proclaiming Vengeance |
| | ANNIHILATOR | Waking The Fury |
| | EPOCH OF UNLIGHT | Caught In The Unlight |
| | GREEN CARNATION | The Writings On The Wall |
| | LOVE HISTORY | new CD |
| | NINTH LEVEL | new CD |
| | NOKTURNAL MORTUM | 10th Anniversary Box Set |
| | SCULPTURED | The Liminal Phase |
| | OSZ Y OSBOURNE | Speak Of The Devil (re) |
| | OSZ Y OSBOURNE | The Ultimate Sin (re) |
| | SHADOWMAN | new CD |
| | VOMITORY | Raped In Their Own Blood (re) |
| | VOMITORY | Redemption (re) |
| | VOMITORY | 10th Anniversary (PLP) |
| | NECRO SCHIZMA | Erupted Evil (re) (+) |
| | THE EROTICS | 21st Century S.O.B. |
| | MIDNIGHT ANGEL | debut CD |
| | ARK | new CD |
| | STEVE VAI | Live At The Astoria (DVD) |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Blown To Pieces |
| | MUTILATED | new CD |
| | 91 SUITE | debut CD |
| | AMBITION | new CD |
| | BOURGEOIS PIGS | Calamity Of Vanities |
| | VINNY BURNS | new CD |
| | ROBERT FLEISCHMAN | World In Your Eyes |
| | GENIUS | EP1 - A Human Into Dreams World |
| | BRAD GILLIS | new CD |
| | HEAVY WEATHER | new CD |
| | HARRY HESS | debut CD |
| | HOUSE OF LORDS | The Power And The Myth |
| | GARY HUGHES | King Arthur's... - Rock Opera |
| | JIMI JAMISON | Empires (+) |
| | JOURNEY | Red 13 EP |
| | LOUD N CLEAR | Disconnected |
| | MAC BETH | new CD |
| | MILLENNIUM | Long Live Rock'n Roll |
| | NEXX | debut CD |
| | NORWAY | new CD |
| spr. | PRAYING MANTIS | new CD |
| | RAMOS | new CD |

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| | THE SIGN | | The Second Coming | Frontiers/Now & Then UK | AXE | The Crown | MTM Sweden |
| | JOHN TACUERI | | new CD | Frontiers/Now & Then UK | CIRCLE OF PAIN | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | TRACY WHITE | | debut CD | Frontiers/Now & Then UK | CONFLICT 6 | Middle American Tragedy | MTM Sweden |
| | ZION | | Pulsatory Paradigm | Frowz Productions | DARE | Belief | MTM Sweden |
| | DIVINE SYNDROME | | Compendium Diablerie: The Demo Days | Full Moon Productions | DIVING FOR PEARLS | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | ACHERON | | Desecration Of The Holy Kingdom | Full Moon Productions | DOGFACE | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | BLACK WITCHERY | | Planet Satan | Full Moon Productions | DRIVEN | Self Inflicted | MTM Sweden |
| | MYSTICUM | | All Your Tears Will Be Ours | Full Moon Productions | HEAVEN'S EDGE | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | PRIMIGENIUM | | Within Deep Dark Chambers | Full Moon Productions | IGNITION | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | SHINING | | Moonlight | Great White North | RIVERDOGS | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | DECAYED REMAINS | | new CD | Great White North | SNAKES IN PARADISE | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | MERLIN | | Abhorrence (re) | Great White North | STEELHOUSE LANE | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | TRAILS OF ANGUISH | | The Secret Place | GWN Sweden | V33 | new CD | MTM Sweden |
| | BLAKK TOTEM | | Under Phoenix Phenomenon | GWN Sweden | MAMMOTH VOLUME | The Early Years | The Music Cartel |
| | DIVINA ENEMA | | Brutal Constructor | GWN Sweden | THE SABIANIS | Beauty For Ashes | The Music Cartel |
| | MERLIN | | Stand | H&S | ABIGOR | new CD | Napalm |
| | HELIX | | The Game | Hall Of Sermon EUR | THE SINS OF THY BELOVED | new CD/DVD | Napalm |
| | DREAMS OF SANITY | | Allen Six | Hammer Muzik | DARGAARD | new CD | Napalm |
| | CAPTOR | | Eldolon | Hammer Muzik | EISHEILIG | new CD | Napalm |
| | DAWN OF DREAMS | | Sokaklarin Sesi | Hammer Muzik | FALKENBACH | Magni Blandinn Ok Megintiri | Napalm |
| | HASRET | | Under The Eternal Blackened Sky (EP) | Hammer Muzik | FORLORN | new CD | Napalm |
| | AETURNUS | | Live (VHS/DVD) | Hammerheart | GOLDEN DAWN | new CD | Napalm |
| | ANCIENT RITES | | When Machine And Man Collide | Hammerheart | HOLLENTON | new CD | Napalm |
| | CONTROL DENIED | | Lieve Hass Krieg | Hammerheart | ICE AGES | new CD | Napalm |
| | DIE AREITER | | new DVD | Hammerheart | LACRIMA PROFUNDERE | new CD | Napalm |
| | DISMEMBER | | The Fluid EP | Hammerheart | NIGHTMARE | new CD | Napalm |
| | FORSYMBYOSIS | | Dawn Of Flames/At Dusk And Forever(+) | Hammerheart | OBTAINED ENSLAVEMENT | new CD | Napalm |
| | GATES OF ISHTAR | | Hypnosia | Hammerheart | OTYG | new CD | Napalm |
| | HEARSE | | INFERNAL | Hammerheart | SETHIERAL | new CD | Napalm |
| | HYPNOSIA | | MACABRE | Hammerheart | THIRDMOON | Blood Forsaken | Napalm |
| | INFERNAL | | MERCENARY | Hammerheart | SUMMON | The Blood Runs Black | Napalm |
| | MACABRE | | RAVENOUS | Hammerheart | TRISTANIA | new DVD | Napalm |
| | MERCENARY | | REPUGNANT | Hammerheart | VINTERSORG | Best Of (DVD) | Napalm |
| | REPUGNANT | | SKYFIRE | Hammerheart | VINTERSORG | The Focusing Blur | Napalm |
| | THRONEAEON | | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Hammerheart | WELNBRAND | new CD | Napalm |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | | INFERNAL | Hammerheart | HIA LELA | Pabudimas | Neat Metal UK |
| | INFERNAL | | INFERNAL | Hellspawn | JAGUAR | Run Ragged | Neat Metal UK |
| | INFERNAL | | PSYHERIA | Hellspawn | LORD | Behind The Curtain Of Darkness | Neat Metal UK |
| | THE PROJECT HATE | | THE PROJECT HATE | Hellspawn | RAGNAROK (UK) | Beloved Of The Raven God | Neat Metal UK |
| | SOILENT GREEN/EYEHATEGOD | | MEATLOCKER SEVEN | Heretic Sound | SHY | Unfinished Business | Neat Metal UK |
| | MEATLOCKER SEVEN | | ATTACK | Killing Helsinki | CADAVRIZER | Beneath The Columns Of Abandoned Gods | Necroharmonic |
| | ATTACK | | KEVIN GILBERT | split EP | ABYSSOS | Witching Metal | Necropolis |
| | IRONWARE | | THE JELLY JAM | The Biological Mechanism Of Hate | ARCHGOAT | Tales Of Desecration | Necropolis |
| | THE JELLY JAM | | PALLAS | Deadlocked | ARKANUM | Faunaz Samgang | Necropolis |
| | PALLAS | | PLATYPUS | The Shaming Of The... | BESECH | Black Emotions | Necropolis |
| | SECOND NATURE | | STAR ONE | Break Out | DEATHWITCH | Deathfuck Rituals | Necropolis |
| | STAR ONE | | VANDEN PLAS | new CD | DREAMS OF DAMNATION | Epic Tales Of Vengeance | Necropolis |
| | VANDEN PLAS | | VARIOUS ARTISTS | new DVD | DEMONIC | Bizarre Ritual Killings | Necropolis |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | | GUNS N' ROSES | new CD | GUILLotine | Nuclear Reactor | Necropolis |
| | GUNS N' ROSES | | SALEM | debut CD | IN AETERNUM | Nuclear Armageddon | Necropolis |
| | SALEM | | PARADISE LOST | Live CD + DVD | MURDER CORPORATION | new CD | Necropolis |
| | PARADISE LOST | | AD INFERNAL | Colour Temple (re) (+) | ROTTEN SOUND | From Crust 'Til Grind | Necropolis |
| | AD INFERNAL | | BLACK ABYSS | EP (re) (+) | ROTTEN SOUND | Murder LIVE (DVD) | Necropolis |
| | BLACK ABYSS | | DIES ATER | Progressive Metal Sampler | SADISTIC INTENT | The Second Coming Of Darkness | Necropolis |
| | DIES ATER | | THE DREAMSIDE | Chinese Democracy | SATANIC SLAUGHTER | Banished To The Underworld | Necropolis |
| | THE DREAMSIDE | | EISREGEN | Collective Demise | SEANCE | Devastation | Necropolis |
| | EISREGEN | | FUNEBRIS | Reflections/Best Of (re) | SERPENT OBSCENE | Split CD w/ANAL BLAST | Nightfall |
| | FUNEBRIS | | GRAVE FLOWERS | Blind Depths Of The Muse | CEPHALIC CARNAGE | Transitional Forms | Nightmare |
| | GRAVE FLOWERS | | RIVER OF CHANGE | Angels Wear Black | DEMYRIA | The Legacy | Nightmare |
| | RIVER OF CHANGE | | ROSSOMAAHAR | new CD | HATE FOREST | Scythia (re) | Noble Wolves Records |
| | ROSSOMAAHAR | | TAROT'S MYST | Lager Leipzig (V) | APOTHEOSIS | Farthest From The Sun | Nocturnal Art Norway |
| | TAROT'S MYST | | VOICES OF DECAY | new CD | VOID | Posthuman | Nocturnal Art Norway |
| | VOICES OF DECAY | | CHASTAIN | Solace Me | DARK FUNERAL | new live CD | No Fashion Sweden |
| | CHASTAIN | | SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN | debut EP | HYPOCRITE | Edge Of Existence | No Fashion Sweden |
| | SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN | | ZANISTER | Quaerite Lux In Tenebris | LOBOTOMY | Dislocated In Emptiness | No Fashion Sweden |
| | ZANISTER | | ARABESQUE | Odyssey | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Where We Go Others Can Only Follow | No Fashion Sweden |
| | ARABESQUE | | JAMES BYRD | Ice | WYVERN | No Defiance Of Fate | No Fashion Sweden |
| | JAMES BYRD | | EMPIRE | new CD | MEZARKABUL | Unspoken | Noise |
| | EMPIRE | | TORBEN ENEVOLDSEN | Double Your Pleasure | SISTHEMA | The Fourth Discontinuity | Noise |
| | TORBEN ENEVOLDSEN | | BRUCE GAITSCH | Symphonica Millennia | VIRGIN STEEL | Live CD | Noise |
| | BRUCE GAITSCH | | MATTSSON | new CD | AGATHODAIMON | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | MATTSSON | | PROIECT ALCAZAR | Lion Music | CIVIL DEFIANCE | Circus Of Fear | Nuclear Blast |
| | PROIECT ALCAZAR | | SECTION A | Lion Music | THE DEFAECED | Karma In Black | Nuclear Blast |
| | SECTION A | | TAKARA | Lion Music | DESTRUCTION | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | TAKARA | | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Lion Music | DISSECTION | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | VARIOUS ARTISTS | | ABSCESS/DERANGED | Lion Music | DISINCARNATE | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | ABSCESS/DERANGED | | ETERNAL GRAY | Lion Music | GORGOROTH | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | ETERNAL GRAY | | LUCIFERION | Lion Music | GRAVEWORM | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | LUCIFERION | | AVERSE SEFIRA | Lion Music | HYPOCRISY | Live And Plugged (DVD) | Nuclear Blast |
| | AVERSE SEFIRA | | COMPOS MENTIS | Lion Music | IMPULSE MANSLAUGHTER | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | COMPOS MENTIS | | PESSIMIST | Lion Music | KING'S X | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | PESSIMIST | | AZEAZERON | Lion Music | THE KOVENANT | S.E.T.I. (The Search For...) | Nuclear Blast |
| | AZEAZERON | | DEVIL'S CROWN | Lion Music | MANDRAGORA SCREAM | A Whisper Of Dew | Nuclear Blast |
| | DEVIL'S CROWN | | FATAL EMBRACE | Lion Music | PEGAZUS | new CD | Nuclear Blast |
| | FATAL EMBRACE | | FRATERNIA | Lion Music | PRIMAL FEAR | new VHS/DVD | Nuclear Blast |
| | FRATERNIA | | ISENGARD | Lion Music | TO/DIE/FOR | The History Of Fear (DVD) | Nuclear Blast |
| | ISENGARD | | PERSUADER | Lion Music | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Jaded | Nuclear Blast |
| | PERSUADER | | EMBRACE | Lion Music | DIABOLIC | Tribute To ABBA | Nuclear Blast |
| | EMBRACE | | KALIBAN | Lion Music | ABOMINATOR | new CD | Olympic/Century Media |
| | KALIBAN | | REVEREND BIZZARRE | Lion Music | ANTAEUS | Cascading Carnage | Osmose Productions |
| | REVEREND BIZZARRE | | DEVISER | Lion Music | AXIS OF ADVANCE | De Principii Evangelikum | Osmose Productions |
| | DEVISER | | OCEANS OF SADNESS | Lion Music | EXMORTEM | debut CD | Osmose Productions |
| | OCEANS OF SADNESS | | PANCHRYSLIA | Lion Music | IMMORTAL | Pestilence Empire | Osmose Productions |
| | PANCHRYSLIA | | TWELFTH OF NEVER | Lion Music | IMPALED NAZARENE | Box Set | Osmose Productions |
| | TWELFTH OF NEVER | | MAGELLAN | Lion Music | INHUME | new CD | Osmose Productions |
| | MAGELLAN | | TILES | Lion Music | MELECHESH | Sphynx | Osmose Productions |
| | TILES | | KELLY KEELING | Lion Music | RAVAGER | Naxxgul Rising | Osmose Productions |
| | KELLY KEELING | | KRUX | Lion Music | VITAL REMAINS | Black Mass/Excruciating Pain (re) | Osmose Productions |
| | KRUX | | HORIZON | Lion Music | CALLENISH CIRCLE | Drift Of Empathy (re) (+) | Painkiller |
| | HORIZON | | LION'S SHARE | Lion Music | EVEN VAST | Outsleeping | Painkiller |
| | LION'S SHARE | | STONER KINGS | Lion Music | ABANDON | new CD | Pavement |
| | STONER KINGS | | BRUTALITY | Lion Music | MIST | Ashes To Ashes, Dust To Dust | Pavement |
| | BRUTALITY | | ALLEGIANCE | Lion Music | NARACUS | debut CD | Pavement |
| | ALLEGIANCE | | BLACKTHORN | Lion Music | AKERCOCKE | Choronzon | Peaceville UK |
| | BLACKTHORN | | RIMINAL | Lion Music | BEYOND DAWN | Electric Sulking Machine | Peaceville UK |
| | RIMINAL | | DIVINE DEATH | Lion Music | GGFH | The Very Best Of/Vol.2 | Peaceville UK |
| | DIVINE DEATH | | JOHN ARCH | Lion Music | SOUNDDISCIPLES | Undefined | Peaceville UK |
| | JOHN ARCH | | KING DIAMOND | Lion Music | THINE | A Town Like This | Peaceville UK |
| | KING DIAMOND | | MANOWAR | Lion Music | RICKY WARWICK | debut CD | Peer Music |
| | MANOWAR | | VEHEMENCE | Lion Music | BORN OF FIRE | new CD | Primitive Art |
| | VEHEMENCE | | SIX FEET UNDER | Lion Music | MORTICIAN | The Final Bloodbath Session | Primitive Art |
| | SIX FEET UNDER | | RAGING STORM | Lion Music | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Tribute To DREAM THEATER | Progressive Arts Media |
| | RAGING STORM | | LOCKED N' LOADED | Lion Music | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Tribute To JEFF BECK | Progressive Arts Media |
| | LOCKED N' LOADED | | ANASARCA | Lion Music | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Tribute To CARLOS SANTANA | Progressive Arts Media |
| | ANASARCA | | BEHEADED | Lion Music | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Tribute To FRANK ZAPPA | Progressive Arts Media |
| | BEHEADED | | NEPHASTH | Lion Music | WRAITH | Dark Gifts | Progressive Arts Media |
| | NEPHASTH | | PANZERCHRIST | Lion Music | BETHLEHEM | Maschinsatan | Prophecy Productions |
| | PANZERCHRIST | | DHG | Lion Music | ALL THAT REMAINS | new CD | Prosthetic |
| | DHG | | KHOLD | Lion Music | BLESSING THE HOGS | new CD | Prosthetic |
| | KHOLD | | NECROPHAGIA | Lion Music | CANNIAE | new CD | Prosthetic |
| | NECROPHAGIA | | ASHES YOU LEAVE | Lion Music | HIMSA | debut CD | Radical |
| | ASHES YOU LEAVE | | EVIL INCARNATE | Lion Music | THESVRE | new CD | Rage Of Achilles UK |
| | EVIL INCARNATE | | MAINPOINT | Lion Music | GOATSBLOOD | Steal The Light EP | Rage Of Achilles UK |
| | MAINPOINT | | MUCUPURULENT | Lion Music | OMNIUM GATHERUM | new CD | Rage Of Achilles UK |
| | MUCUPURULENT | | VIRULENCE | Lion Music | MISTRESS | Mistress | Rage Of Achilles USA |
| | VIRULENCE | | VOMITORIAL CORPULENCE | Lion Music | TEEN CTULHU | Ride The Blade | Rage Of Achilles USA |
| | VOMITORIAL CORPULENCE | | DARK QUARTERER | Lion Music | UNDERLORD | Rise Of The Ancient Kings | Rage Of Achilles USA |
| | DARK QUARTERER | | PROMISED LIE | Lion Music | ABAZAGORATH | The Spirit Of Hate For Mankind EP | Red Stream |
| | PROMISED LIE | | SPITFIRE | Lion Music | BETHLEHEM | Schatten aus der Alexander Welt | Red Stream |
| | SPITFIRE | | ACT | Lion Music | EIBON | debut CD | Red Stream |
| | ACT | | | Lion Music | FOREST OF IMPALED | Forward The Spears | Red Stream |
| | | | | Lion Music | GORELORD/WURDULAK | Creature Feature Part Two + (DVD) | Red Stream |
| | | | | Lion Music | HIDDEN | Spectral Magnitude | Red Stream |
| | | | | Lion Music | NECROPHAGIA | Season Of The Dead (CD/PLP) | Red Stream |
| | | | | Lion Music | NECROPHAGIA | new DVD | Red Stream |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| NIGHTMARE LODGE | Tentacle | Red Stream | DANZIG | Live On The Blackhand Side (V) | Spitfire |
| SEAR BLISS | Grand Destiny (re) | Red Stream | DANZIG | Black Aria II | Spitfire |
| SEAR BLISS | Forsaken Symphony | Red Stream | DEEP PURPLE | California Jam (V) | Spitfire |
| SKEPTICISM | Stormcrowfleet | Red Stream | DEEP PURPLE | Concerto For Deep Purple (V) | Spitfire |
| LORD BELIAL | In Nomine Satanas | Regain | EUROPE | Prisoners In Paradise (re) | Spitfire |
| RAGNAROK | Altered States Of America (3" CD) | Regain | GRIP INC. | new CD | Spitfire |
| AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED | new CD | Relapse | KARMA TO BURN | new CD | Spitfire |
| ALCHEMIST | By Means Of Upheaval | Relapse | L/P | debut CD | Spitfire |
| BENUMB | Venom | Relapse | NAPALM DEATH | Leaders Not Followers Part 2 | Spitfire |
| BREACH | new CD | Relapse | SEBASTIAN BACH | new (VHS/DVD) | Spitfire Slight |
| CONTRASTIC | new CD | Relapse | TESTAMENT | new CD | Spitfire |
| DYSRHYTHMIA | new CD | Relapse | BLAZE | new CD | SPV |
| EXHUMED | Platters Of Splatter.../ 1992 - 2002 | Relapse | KREATOR | Live Kreation (Revised Glory) + DVD | SPV |
| HEMDALE/EXHUMED | In The Name Of Gore | Relapse | THE REIGN OF TERROR | Look Behind | SPV |
| HUMAN REMAINS | Using Sickness As A Hero (re +) | Relapse | ROUGH SILK | End Of Infinity | SPV |
| LOST SOUL | new CD | Relapse | SAGA | Live (DVD) | SPV |
| MASONNA | new CD | Relapse | SAVATAGE | Stories | SPV |
| MORGION | new CD | Relapse | SAXON | Solid Ball Of Rock (re) (+) | SPV |
| MORTICIAN | Darkest Day Of Horror | Relapse | SAXON | Forever Free (re) (+) | SPV |
| NASUM | Blueprints For Extinction | Relapse | SEPULTURA | Revolutions EP | SPV |
| NOMINON | new CD | Relapse | SEPULTURA | new CD | SPV |
| PAIN JERK | new CD | Relapse | COMPANY OF SNAKES | Burst The Bubble | Steamhammer |
| SKINLESS | From Sacrifice To Survival | Relapse | DEMONS & WIZARDS | new CD | Steamhammer |
| VARIOUS ARTISTS | In These Black Days | Relapse | METAL CHURCH | new CD | Steamhammer |
| AMOEBIA | Somnium (DVD) | Release | ULI ION ROTH | Sky Of Avalon (re) | Steamhammer |
| AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED | 7" picture disc | Reptilian Records | SAVATAGE | Best Of | Steamhammer |
| NUNSLAUGHTER | Goat | Revenge Productions | SAXON | Dogs Of War (re) | Steamhammer |
| BONGZILLA | Shake | Rhetoric | SAXON | Unleash The Beast (re) | Steamhammer |
| DEVILS SUN | debut CD | Rise Above | SODOM | new DVD | Steamhammer |
| GRAND MAGUS | Monument | Rise Above | VIRGO | new CD | Steamhammer |
| SALLY | new CD | Rise Above | LIFE BEYOND | Thousand Vision Mist | Sweden Rock |
| SHALLOW | new CD | Rise Above | LOCOMOTIVE BREATH | Heavy Machinery | Sweden Rock |
| CLUTCH | Live At The Googolplex | River Road | SLOW TRAIN | Song Of The Day | Sweden Rock |
| DOKKEN | Best Of (DVD) | Sanctuary | SPEARFISH | Affected By Time | Sweden Rock |
| W.A.S.P. | new CD (2CD) | Sanctuary | TWINBALL | Remnants Of A Broken Soul | Sweden Rock |
| DISARMONIA MUNDI | new CD | Scarlet | SOULDIVIDER | Supersound City | 12th Planet Music |
| INVOCATOR | new CD | Scarlet | MONUMENTUM | Ad Nauseam | Tatra |
| PLATITUDE | Secrets Of Life | Scarlet | MAD MEN & SINNERS | new CD | Skyscraper |
| THE PROVENANCE | Still At Arms Length | Scarlet | QUO VADIS | From Sequence To Consequence | Voices Of Wonder Norway |
| SORG | Enigma Grotesque | Scarlet | ENSLAVEMENT OF BEAUTY | Traces O' Red | Voices Of Wonder Norway |
| STORMLORD | new CD | Scarlet | OF THE WIND AND THE MOON | Nighttime Nightrhymes | Voices Of Wonder Norway |
| BRUTAL PRIDE | debut CD | Screaming Ferret | PARADIGMA | The Beckoning Of Lost Light | Voices Of Wonder Norway |
| DISDAIN | Molest The Unfortunate | Screaming Ferret | RAGNAROK | Diabolical Age | Voices Of Wonder Norway |
| MELIAH RAGE | Unfinished Business | Screaming Ferret | STIGMATHIST | It All Ends Today | Voices Of Wonder Norway |
| AGRESSOR | Medieval Rites | Season Of Mist | TROLL | The Last Predators | Voices Of Wonder Norway |
| CULTUS SANGUINE | The Sum Of All Fears | Season Of Mist | THE CHASM | Conjunction Of The Spectral Empire | Witches Brew |
| PENUMBRA | new CD | Season Of Mist | COFFIN TEXTS | Tomb Of Infinite Ritual | WWIII |
| SACRED RITE | Rites Of Passage Vol. 1 & 2 | Sentinel Steel | ENFORSAKEN | Into The Everblack | WWIII |
| EIDOLON | Apostles Of Defiance | Skyscraper | FOG | Disturbing The Balance Of The Spheres | WWIII |
| NECRONOMICON | The Sacred Medicines | Skyscraper | VOID OF SILENCE | Criteria OV 666 | WWIII |
| UNEXPECT | new CD | Skyscraper | WHICH HEAVEN | Respawning Of The Gods | WWIII |
| VARIOUS ARTISTS | Into The Blizzard Vol. 3 | Skyscraper | ARABIA | new CD | Z UK |
| DARKTHRONE | Unholy Trinity (3LP Box) | Snapper UK | BURNING RAIN | new CD | Z UK |
| OPETH | Anthology | Snapper UK | CONTAGIOUS | Mule Britannia | Z UK |
| THUNDER | Symphony & Stage | Snapper UK | DANNY DANZI | Danziland | Z UK |
| W.A.S.P. | The Best Of The Best - 1984-2000 | Snapper UK | HUMANIMAL | Find My Way Home EP | Z UK |
| OVERSEER | debut CD | Sony | NARO | Glass Mountain | Z UK |
| ETERNAL GRIEF | new CD | Sound Riot | ECLIPSE | Eclipse | Z UK |
| MINDGRINDER | debut CD | Sound Riot | NORTHWIND | Seasons | Z UK |
| NIGHTSIDE | new CD | Sound Riot | PROPHET | Cycle Of The Moon | Z UK |
| THE RAVENOUS | Blood Delirium | Southern Lord | PUSH | new CD | Z UK |
| BARATHRUM | Saatana | Spinefarm Finland | 21 GUNS | Demolition | Z UK |
| CRYHAVOC | new CD | Spinefarm Finland | WILD HORSES | new CD | Z UK |
| SEBASTIAN BACH | new CD | Spitfire | | | |
| BAKERTON GROUP (CLUTCH) | new CD | Spitfire | | | |
| BRITNY FOX | new CD | Spitfire | | | |

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BRAVE PICKS

What's been polluting our ears...

Tim Henderson

- 1) THE HAUNTED - One Kill Wonder (Earache)
 - 2) VOIVOD - Voivod (Chophouse)
 - 3) MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM/The End)
 - 4) GOD DETHRONED - Into The Lungs Of Hell (Metal Blade)
 - 5) STRATOVARIUS - Elements Pt. 1 (Nuclear Blast)
 - 6) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 7) ANTHRAX - We've Come For You All (Nuclear Blast)
 - 8) CRADLE OF FILTH - Damnation And A Day (Epic/Sony)
 - 9) NAIL WITHIN - Nail Within (Listenable)
 - 10) O.S.I. - Office Of Strategic Influence (InsideOut)
- Brave Embarrassment:** DREAM EVIL - Evilized (Century Media)
- Sorry Fredrik, but the Hammer must Fall!
- HardFact:** XENTRIX - For Whose Advantage? (Roadrunner)
- Reading:** Ghost Rider - Travels On The Healing Road by Neil Peart

Martin Popoff

- 1) RAPTURE - Songs For The Withering (Spikefarm/Century Media)
 - 2) SIR HEDGEHOG - Sir Hedgehog (Lunasound/PHD)
 - 3) OSI - Office Of Strategic Influence (InsideOut Music America)
 - 4) PORCUPINETREE - In Absentia (Lava/Warner)
 - 5) OPETH - Deliverance (Koch)
 - 6) NIGHTINGALE - Alive Again: The Breathing Shadow Part IV (The End)
 - 7) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 8) THE HAUNTED - One Kill Wonder (Earache)
 - 9) AMON AMARTH - Versus The World (Metal Blade)
 - 10) EVENT - Scratching At The Surface (InsideOut Music America)
- Brave Embarrassment:** MACHINE HEAD - Hellalive (Roadrunner)
- I can see that it's going to take A LOT of attitude adjustment to strip the nu-metal out of this band.
- HardFact:** TUCKY BUZZARD - Buzzard! (Purple '73)
- Reading:** Dangerous Kitchen: The Subversive World Of Zappa by Kevin Courrier (ECW Press)

Carl Becai

- 1) MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM)
 - 2) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 3) MYP - The Altar (Mascot Records)
 - 4) DAWN OF RELIC - Lovcraftian Dark (Season Of Mist)
 - 5) PAUL GILBERT - Burning Organ (Mascot Records)
 - 6) KAMELOT - Epica (Sanctuary)
 - 7) STRATOVARIUS - Elements Pt. 1 (Nuclear Blast)
 - 8) ORATORY - Beyond Earth (Limb Music)
 - 9) THYRFING - Vansinnesvisor (Hammerheart)
 - 10) OSI - Office Of Strategic Influence (InsideOut)
- Brave Embarrassment:** JUDAS PRIEST - Live In London (SPV)
- Beyond The Realms Of Integrity...
- HardFact:** Queensryche - Operation: Mindcrime
- Reading:** The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Mark Gromen

- 1) EVERGREY - Recreation Day (InsideOut)
 - 2) SEVEN WITCHES - Passage To The Other Side (Sanctuary)
 - 3) AXEL RUDI PELL - Knights Live (SPV)
 - 4) DRAGONFORCE - Valley Of The Damned (Sanctuary)
 - 5) KAMELOT - Epica (Sanctuary)
 - 6) RUNNING WILD - Live (GUN)
 - 7) ANGRA - Rebirth World Tour: Live In Sao Paulo (Rock Brigade)
 - 8) MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM)
 - 9) THALARION - Tunes Of Despondency (Mighty Music)
 - 10) VARIOUS ARTISTS - Tribute To The Four Horsemen (Nuclear Blast)
- Brave Embarrassment:** SUPARED - Supared (Sanctuary)
- The worst denial of one's past since Geoff Tate's solo disc (also for Sanctuary, by the way).
- HardFact:** NASTY SAVAGE - Nasty Savage (Metal Blade)

Aaron Small

- 1) CRADLE OF FILTH - Damnation And A Day (Sony)
 - 2) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 3) ANTHRAX - We've Come For You All (Nuclear Blast Germany)
 - 4) OLD MAN'S CHILD - In Defiance Of Existence (Century Media)
 - 5) JACKYL - Relentless (Humidity)
 - 6) AUDIOSLAVE - Audioslave (Epic/Interscope)
 - 7) IRON MAIDEN - Eddie's Archive (EMI)
 - 8) SILVERTIDE - American Excess (J Records)
 - 9) NAIL WITHIN - Nail Within (Listenable)
 - 10) MERAUDER - Bluetality (Century Media)
- Brave Embarrassment:** DEMON HUNTER - Demon Hunter (Solid State)
- Nu metal that's been done to death by much better bands.
- HardFact:** CARCASS - Heartwork (Earache/Columbia)
- Reading:** Servant Of The Bones by Anne Rice (Ballantine)

Chris Bruni

- 1) ARKHON INFAUSTUS - Filth Catalyst (Osmose)
 - 2) USURPER - Twilight Dominion (Earache)
 - 3) ABORYM - With No Human Intervention (Code666)
 - 4) THE CHASM - Conjugation Of The Spectral Empire (Witches Brew/Lux Inframundis)
 - 5) GOD DETHRONED - Into The Lungs Of Hell (Metal Blade)
 - 6) WYRD - Huldrafolk (Millennium Metal)
 - 7) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 8) THY DYING LIGHT - Survival Guide To The Apocalypse (Hypercube)
 - 9) MONUMENTUM - Ad Nauseum (Tatra)
 - 10) REVENGE - Triumph.Genocide.Antichrist (Osmose)
- Brave Embarrassment:** MERAUDER - Bluetality (Century Media)
- Every time these guys put out an album, I keep begging Only Living Witness to reform.
- HardFact:** BEHERIT - Drawing Down The Moon (Spinefarm)
- Reading:** Hollywood Hulk Hogan by Hollywood Hulk Hogan

David Perri

- 1) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 2) ULVER - Lyckantropen Themes (Jester/The End)
 - 3) OPETH - Deliverance (Koch)
 - 4) NOSTROMO - Ecce Lex (Overcome)
 - 5) RAUNCHY - Velvet Noise (Nuclear Blast)
 - 6) AMON AMARTH - Versus The World (Metal Blade)
 - 7) BEHEMOTH - Zos Kia Cultus (Century Media)
 - 8) BLOODBATH - Resurrection Through Carnage (Century Media)
 - 9) VALIS - Vast Active Learning System (Abstract)
 - 10) YAKUZA - Way Of The Dead (Century Media)
- Brave Embarrassment:** NIGHTINGALE - Alive Again (The End)
- Swano's latest is a resurrection through '80s AOR carnage...
- HardFact:** MERCYFUL FATE - Don't Break The Oath (Roadrunner)
- Reading:** Canadian Criminal Law by Don Stuart and Ronald J. Delisle

Clay Marshall

- 1) OPETH - Deliverance (Koch)
 - 2) OSI - Office Of Strategic Influence (InsideOut)
 - 3) PORCUPINE TREE - In Absentia (Lava/Atlantic)
 - 4) DAYLIGHT DIES - No Reply (Relapse)
 - 5) NIGHTINGALE - Alive Again (The End)
 - 6) COSMOSQUAD - Live At The Baked Potato (Marmaduke)
 - 7) CALIFORNIA GUITAR TRIO - CG3+2 (InsideOut)
 - 8) DEMON HUNTER - Demon Hunter (Solid State)
 - 9) SIGN OF 4 - Dancing With St. Peter (Track)
 - 10) CATHEDRAL - The VIlth Coming (Spitfire)
- Brave Embarrassment:** ANTIMATTER - Saviour (The End)
- Wake me when it's over...
- HardFact:** SKID ROW - Slave To The Grind (Atlantic)
- Reading:** Sex, Lies and Headlocks by Shaun Assael (Crown)

Greg Pratt

- 1) RAISED FIST - Dedication (Epitaph)
 - 2) BOTCH - An Anthology Of Dead Ends (Hydra Head)
 - 3) CAVE IN - Tides Of Tomorrow (Hydra Head)
 - 4) RECUEIL MORBIDE - Hurt By Human Race (Deadson)
 - 5) IMMOLATION - Unholy Cult (Olympic)
 - 6) RATOS DE PORAO - Onisciente Coletive (Alternative Tentacles)
 - 7) SOULLESS - Agony's Lament (Worldchaos)
 - 8) WARHAG - Sinister Grip (indie)
 - 9) SOULFORGE - Duality (Great White North)
 - 10) NASTY SAVAGE - Wage Of Mayhem (Crock'd)
- Brave Embarrassment:** ANNIHILATOR - Waking The Fury (SPV)
- Brutal production, and a complete lack of hooks from a guy usually overflowing with them.
- HardFact:** ONSLAUGHT - The Fury (Fringe)
- Reading:** Bang Your Head by David Konow

Alex S. Johnson

- 1) SOLACE - 13 (Meteor City)
 - 2) OPETH - Deliverance (Music For Nations)
 - 3) CRADLE OF FILTH - Live Bait For The Dead (AbraCadaver)
 - 4) SOURVEIN - Will To Mangle (Southern Lord)
 - 5) GRIEF - Turbulent Times (Southern Lord)
 - 6) ABSCESS - Through The Cracks Of Death (Peaceville)
 - 7) HELLBLOCK66 - Burnin' Doom (Worlddeater)
 - 8) ENTER CHAOS - Dreamworker (Metal Mind)
 - 9) MALEVOLENT CREATION - The Will To Kill (Arctic)
 - 10) THY INFERNAL - Warlords Of Hell (Moribund)
- HardFact:** ACID BATH - When The Kite String Pops (Rotten)
- Reading:** Kingdom Of Fear by Hunter S. Thompson

Allan Grusie

- 1) KAMELOT - Epica (Sanctuary)
 - 2) RAPTURE - Songs For The Withering (Century Media)
 - 3) PORCUPINETREE - In Absentia (Lava)
 - 4) DUSHAN PETROSSI, S IRON MASK - Revenge Is My Name (Lion Mu)
 - 5) FATAL SMILE - Beyond Reality (GMR Music)
 - 6) JEFF SCOTT SOTO - Prism (Frontiers)
 - 7) CATHEDRAL - The Seventh Coming (DreamCatcher)
 - 8) GRAVE - Back From The Grave (Century Media)
 - 9) TOTO - Through The Looking Glass (CMC/Capitol)
 - 10) KINGDOM COME - Independent (Ulfone - Germany)
- Brave Embarrassment:** SAMMY HAGAR - Not For Sale (33rd Street)
- Shouldn't be for sale - should be for FREE!
- HardFact:** DREAM THEATER - Images And Words (Atlantic)

Tim Wadzinski

- 1) MASTERPLAN - "Enlighten Me" (AFM)
 - 2) MOB RULES - Hollowed Be Thy Name (Steamhammer/SPV)
 - 3) SYMPHORE - Phorceful Ahead (Metal Blade)
 - 4) LUCA TURILLI - Prophet Of The Last Eclipse (LMP/SPV)
 - 5) EDGUY - Mandrake (AFM)
 - 6) EDWARD BOX - Plectrum Head (Lion)
 - 7) SHADOWKEEP - A Chaos Theory (LMP/SPV)
 - 8) SUM 41 - Does This Look Infected? (Island)
 - 9) MISSA MERCURIA - Missa Mercuria (Generation)
 - 10) ANIMAL - 900 lb. Steam (Perris)
- Brave Embarrassment:** STAR QUEEN - Faithbringer (Lion)
- Ambitious and cool musically, obnoxious and freaky vocally...
- HardFact:** VIRGIN STEELE - Guardians Of The Flame (Sanctuary/Noise/T&S)
- Reading:** Kiss Alive Forever - The Complete Touring History by C.Gooch & J.Suh (Billboard Books)

Jack(ie) Short

- 1) THE HAUNTED - One Kill Wonder (Earache)
 - 2) VOIVOD - Voivod (Chophouse)
 - 3) MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM/The End)
 - 4) STRATOVARIUS - Elements Pt. 1 (Nuclear Blast)
 - 5) CRADLE OF FILTH - Damnation And A Day (Epic/Sony)
 - 6) GOD DETHRONED - Into The Lungs Of Hell (Metal Blade)
 - 7) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 8) ANTHRAX - We've Come For You All (Nuclear Blast)
 - 9) O.S.I. - Office Of Strategic Influence (InsideOut)
 - 10) KAMELOT - Epica (Sanctuary)
- Brave Embarrassment:** NIGHTINGALE - Alive Again: The Breathing Shadow Part IV (The End)
- Swano swoons himself back to '80s AOR hell ... strange indeed!
- HardFact:** EXODUS - Bonded By Blood (Century Media)
- Reading:** SHAKEY - Neil Young's Biography by Jimmy McDonough

Huques LaFlamme (Brave Pilgrim)

- 1) MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM)
 - 2) KAMELOT - Epica (Noise/Sanctuary)
 - 3) SPIRITUAL BEGGARS - On Fire (Music For Nations/Koch)
 - 4) AUDIOSLAVE - Audioslave (Epic/Interscope)
 - 5) LIVA - Requiem (Stoke)
 - 6) OSI - Office Of Strategic Influence (Inside Out)
 - 7) LUCA TURILLI - Prophet Of The Last Eclipse (LMP)
 - 8) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 9) STRATOVARIUS - Elements Part I (Nuclear Blast)
 - 10) DIONYSUS - Sign Of Truth (AFM)
- Brave Embarrassment:** CRADLE OF FILTH - Damnation And A Day (Sony)
- Unlike good wine that gets better with age, COF went from bad to worse!
- HardFact:** RAGE - The Missing Link (Noise)
- Reading:** Uriel's Machine by Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas

Angie Rue

- 1) LIVA - Requiem (Stoke)
 - 2) OSI - Office Of Strategic Influence (Inside Out)
 - 3) STRAPPING YOUNG LAD - SYL (Century Media)
 - 4) SPIRITUAL BEGGARS - On Fire (Music For Nations/Koch)
 - 5) AMON AMARTH - Versus The World (Metal Blade)
 - 6) OPETH - Deliverance (Koch)
 - 7) GRAVE - Back From The Grave (Century Media)
 - 8) BLOODBATH - Resurrection Through Carnage (Century Media)
 - 9) THERION - Live In Midgard (Nuclear Blast)
 - 10) MASTERPLAN - Masterplan (AFM)
- Brave Embarrassment:** NIGHTINGALE - Alive Again (The End)
- Swano needs to take another dip in his Bloodbath.
- HardFact:** THERION - Theli (Nuclear Blast)
- Reading:** The Hiram Key by Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas

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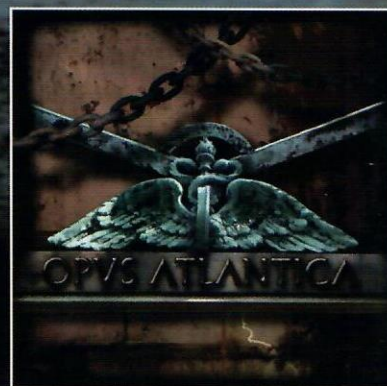


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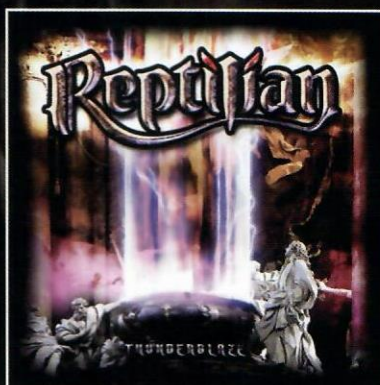
OPUS ATLANTICA - Opus Atlantica

Symphonic power metal with classical elements. Feat. Pete Sandberg (ex. Alien) and members of Andromeda, The Flower Kings and Midnight Sun.



TIME REQUIEM - Time Requiem

The stunning new project by ex-Majestic keyboard player, Richard Andersoon. 9 tracks of traditional power with aggressive neo-classical progressive metal elements.



REPTILIAN - Thunderblaze

Feat. ex-members of Majestic and Nasty Idols. This second album shows the band delivering a more aggressive album with uplifting neo-classical heavy metal.



TENE BRE - Electric Hellfire Kiss

Tenebre offers traditional hard rock with horror soundtrack atmospheres. "Electric Hellfire Kiss" portrays 10 cuts of vampyric, Rock 'N' Goth in the vein of Danzig, 69 Eyes and even Paradise Lost.

DEFLESHED - Royal Straight Flesh

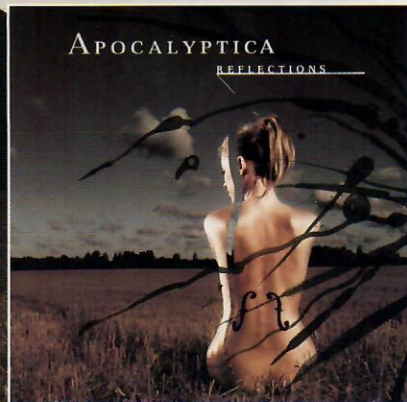
With "Royal Straight Flesh" Defleshed doesn't follow trends and simply continue with what they do best and deliver an 11 track onslaught of old school black metal wrapped with straightforward thrash riffing that is crunchy, violent and brutal to the core.



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RAUNCHY

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- blabbermouth.net



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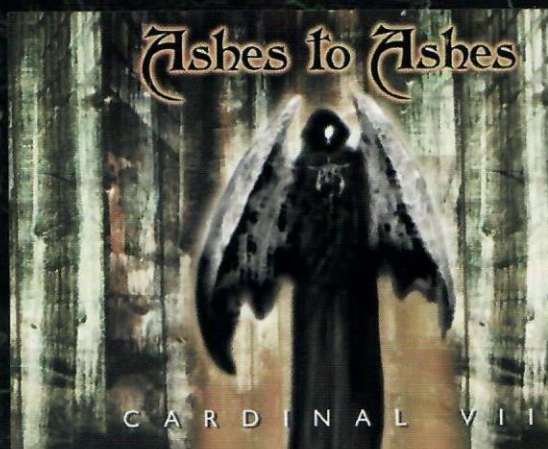


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Primal Power Addiction

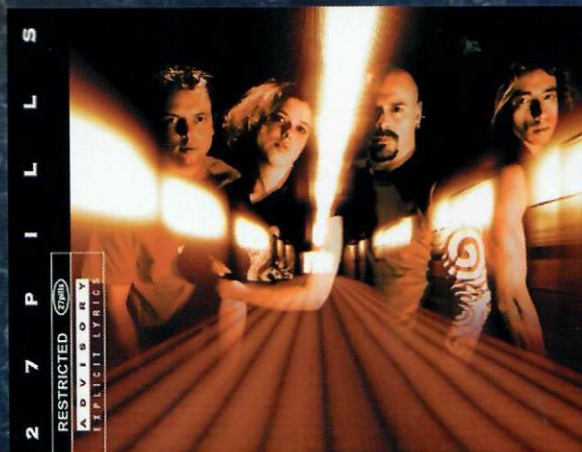
The much anticipated second album from Canada's best kept secret. Heaven's Cry brings refreshment to the progressive rock/metal scene.



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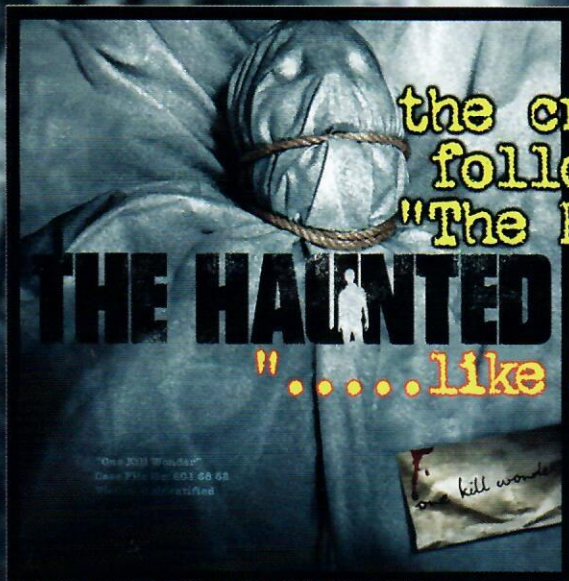
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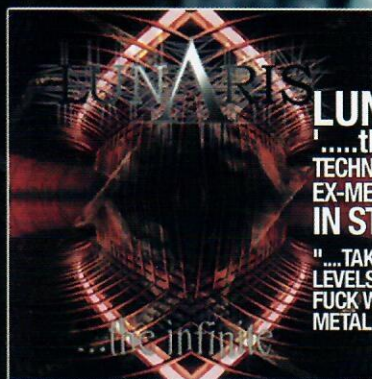
THE HAUNTED



"One Kill Wonder" is the crushing, long-awaited follow up album to 2000's "The Haunted Made Me Do It"

".....like a steel-toed boot to your skull."
-Alternative Press

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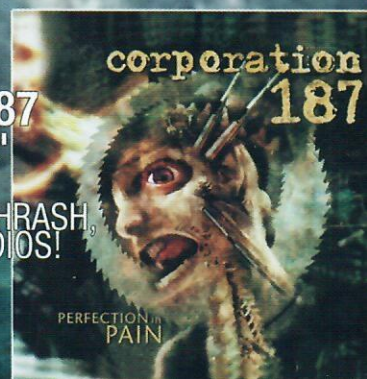
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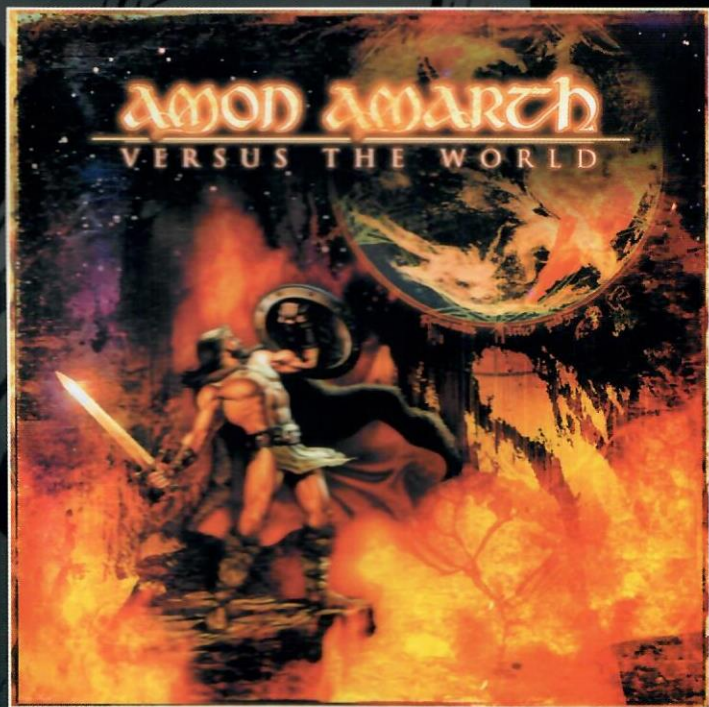


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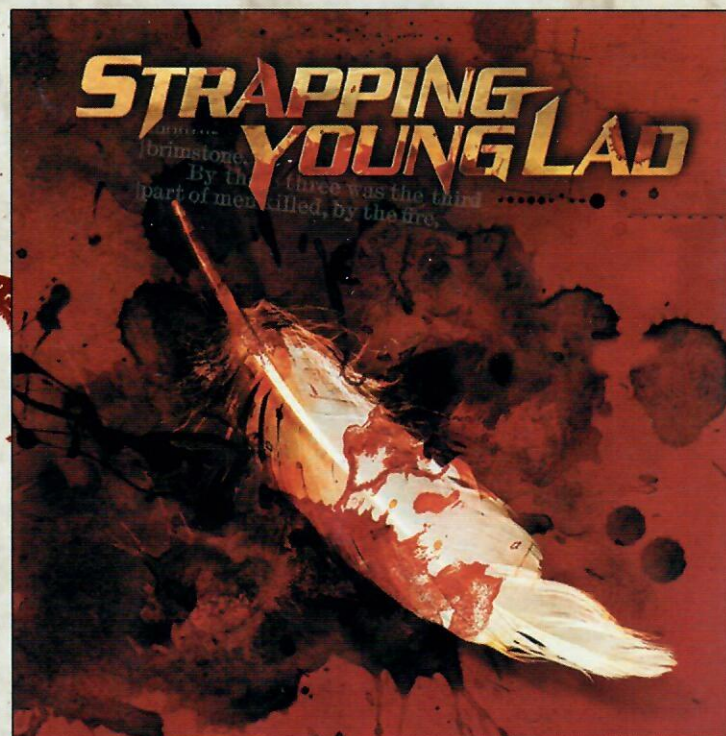
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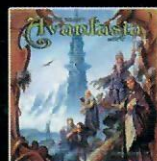
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